SAINT PETER DAMIAN

Sermons

Sermones

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Saint Peter Damian (1007–1072)
Sermones · Sermons

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1-2 JANUARIUS.

VI. Sermo in Epiphania Domini.
XIV. Sermo de translatione S. Hilarii episcopi Pictaviensis et confessoris.
XXII. Sermo de S. Anastasio monacho et martyre.

Sermo Primus.

IN EPIPHANIA DOMINI (VI JAN.).

«Cum natus esset Jesus in Bethlehem Judae in diebus Herodis regis, ecce magi ab oriente venerunt Hierosolymam, dicentes: Ubi est, qui natus est rex Judaeorum? Vidimus enim stellam ejus in oriente, et venimus cum muneribus adorare eum (Matth. II).» «Laudate Dominum, omnes gentes, et collaudate eum omnes populi (Psal. CXVI).» Nam cum omnipotens sermo nondum a regalibus sedibus descendisset «et nox in suo cursu medium iter ageret (Sap. XVIII),» populus gentium ambulabat in tenebris (Isai. IX), quia «dilexerunt magis tenebras quam lucem (Joan. III),» variosque secuti errores, «in circuitu impii ambulabant (Psal. I),» euntes unusquisque, «alius ad villam, alius ad negotiationem suam (Matth. XXII); et obscuratum est insipiens cor eorum (Rom. I),» quia incurvatus est unusquisque ad opus manuum suarum. Patres etiam illi antiqui omnes sub nube fuerunt (I Cor. X), eo quod aspiciebant in visu noctis, nec claritatem vultus Moysi poterant intueri (Exod. XXXIV; II Cor. III), quia velamen erat positum super cor eorum, et erat aqua tenebrosa in nubibus aeris (Psal. XVII), cum videlicet filii Sion inclyti conversi sunt in vasa testea, opus manuum figuli; dispersi sunt lapides sanctuarii in capite omnium platearum; argentum eorum versum est in scoriam, eo quod caupones eorum miscebant aquam vino; quando obscuratum est aurum, mutatus est color optimus (Thren. IV); nec erat de eis qui faceret bonum, nec etiam usque ad unum (Psal. XIII). Tunc ergo tenebrae factae sunt super universam terram (Matth. XXVII), quia Judaeus et gentilis in tenebris straverunt lectum suum, habitantes in tenebrosis et umbra mortis (Luc. I).

SERMONS OF BLESSED PETER DAMIAN, CARDINAL OF THE HOLY ROMAN CHURCH, BISHOP OF OSTIA, OF THE ORDER OF ST. BENEDICT, PRESERVED IN THE ORDER OF THE MONTHS (C,G)*

1-2 JANUARY.

VI. Sermon on the Epiphany of the Lord.
XIV. Sermon on the translation of St. Hilary, bishop of Poitiers and confessor.
XXII. Sermon on St. Anastasius, monk and martyr.

FIRST SERMON. ON THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (JAN. 6).

"When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah in the days of King Herod, behold, magi came from the east to Jerusalem, saying: Where is he who is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and have come with gifts to adore him (Matt. II)." "Praise the Lord, all you nations, and praise him together, all you peoples (Psal. CXVI)." For when the almighty Word had not yet descended from his royal seats "and night was in the midst of her course (Wisd. XVIII)," the people of the nations walked in darkness (Isai. IX), because "they loved darkness more than light (John III)," and following various errors, "the wicked walked in a circuit (Psal. I)," each one going, "one to his farm, another to his business (Matt. XXII); and their foolish heart was darkened (Rom. I)," because each one was bowed down to the work of his own hands. All those ancient fathers were also under the cloud (I Cor. X), because they looked in a vision of the night, nor could they behold the brightness of the face of Moses (Exod. XXXIV; II Cor. III), because a veil was placed over their heart, and there was dark water in the clouds of the air (Psal. XVII), when indeed the noble sons of Zion were turned into earthen vessels, the work of the potter's hands; the stones of the sanctuary were scattered at the head of every street; their silver was turned into dross, because their wine-sellers mixed water with the wine; when the gold was darkened, the best color was changed (Lam. IV); nor was there anyone among them who did good, not even so much as one (Psal. XIII). Then, therefore, darkness was made over the whole earth (Matt. XXVII), because the Jew and the Gentile spread their bed in darkness, dwelling in darkness and the shadow of death (Luke I).

Quia igitur tunc nox praecessit, ecce dies appropinquavit (Rom. XIII), et lumen refulsit in habitaculo carceris nostri, ex eo quod exortum est in tenebris lumen rectis corde (Psal. CXI), cum visitavit nos oriens ex alto (Luc. I); et ortus est nobis lucifer matutinus, qui non novit occasum, quando lux illa vera, quae illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum, in tenebris luxit, et tenebrae eam non comprehenderunt (Joan. I).

Judaei itaque et gentiles in tenebris erant usque ad tempus plenitudinis. At ubi venit plenitudo temporis (Galat. IV), emisit Agnum Dominus dominatorem terrae de petra deserti ad montem filiae Sion (Isa. XVI), et lapidem, quem reprobaverunt aedificantes, hic factus est in caput anguli (Psal. CXVII). Et quia ad hoc venerat, ut oves dispersas congregaret in unum, licet non fuerit primo missus, nisi ad oves, quae perierant domus Israel (Matth. XV); quia tamen alias oves habebat, quae non erant ex hoc ovili, et illas oportebat eum adducere, ut fieret unum ovile et unus pastor (Joan. X), idcirco habitantibus in regione umbrae mortis tam Judaeis quam gentibus lux orta est eis utrisque (Isa. IX), propter quod et in nativitate claritas Dei circumfulsit pastores, quia angelus evangelizavit eis gaudium magnum (Luc. II); et hodierna die stellae claritas natum denuntiat Salvatorem (Matth. II). Judaeis itaque tanquam ratione utentibus loquitur vox angelorum, gentibus vero quasi brutis et jumentis in campis silvae loquitur lingua, sive stella coelorum. Lux nostra itaque demonstrat lucem, creatura suum indicat Creatorem, suum loquitur factura factorem, et nova stella denuntiat verum solem. «Laudate ergo Dominum, omnes gentes, et collaudate eum, omnes populi (Psal. CXVI). Laetamini, gentes, simul cum plebe ejus (Rom. XV).» Gaudeant gentiles, exsultent Judaei, quia ecce sol de stella enituit, et Factor Virginis factus est in Virgine factura sua. Homo enim, qui factus est in ea, ipse fundavit eam Altissimus (Psal. LXXXVI). Ortus est itaque sol de stella, sanitas ex aegritudine, ex morticinio vita, lux ex tenebris, dulcedo ex amaritudine, et spina rosa, pater ex filia, dominus ex ancilla, ex de exiguo rivulo «fons aquae salientis in vitam aeternam (Joan. IV).» Oritur ergo sol de stella, et demonstratur sol per stellam.

Because, therefore, then the night passed, behold, the day has drawn near (Rom. XIII), and light has shone in the dwelling of our prison, because light has risen in the darkness for the upright of heart (Psal. CXI), when the Orient from on high has visited us (Luke I); and the morning star has risen for us, which knows no setting, when that true light, which enlightens every man coming into this world, shone in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it (John I).

The Jews, therefore, and the Gentiles were in darkness until the time of fullness. But when the fullness of time came (Galat. IV), the Lord sent the Lamb, the ruler of the earth, from the rock of the desert to the mountain of the daughter of Zion (Isa. XVI), and the stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner (Psal. CXVII). And because he had come for this, that he might gather together in one the scattered sheep, although he was not first sent except to the sheep that had perished of the house of Israel (Matth. XV); yet because he had other sheep, which were not of this fold, and it was necessary for him to bring them, so that there might be one fold and one shepherd (John X), therefore for those dwelling in the region of the shadow of death, both Jews and Gentiles, light has risen for them both (Isa. IX), on account of which also in the nativity the brightness of God shone round about the shepherds, because the angel announced to them great joy (Luke II); and on this day the brightness of a star announces the newborn Savior (Matth. II). Therefore to the Jews, as to those using reason, the voice of the angels speaks; but to the Gentiles, as to beasts and cattle in the fields of the forest, the tongue or the star of the heavens speaks. Our light, therefore, demonstrates the light, the creature indicates its Creator, the thing made speaks of its maker, and a new star announces the true sun. "Praise the Lord, therefore, all you nations, and praise him together, all you peoples (Psal. CXVI). Rejoice, you nations, together with his people (Rom. XV)." Let the Gentiles be glad, let the Jews exult, because behold, the sun has shone forth from the star, and the Maker of the Virgin was made in the Virgin his own handiwork. For the man who was made in her, the Most High himself founded her (Psal. LXXXVI). Therefore the sun has risen from the star, health from sickness, life from death, light from darkness, sweetness from bitterness, and a rose from a thorn, a father from a daughter, a lord from a handmaid, and from a tiny stream "a fountain of water springing up into eternal life (John IV)." Therefore the sun rises from the star, and the sun is demonstrated by the star.

Erat stella in aere, stella in terra, sol in praesepio. Stella in aere, corpus illud lucidum; stella in terra virgo Maria; sol in praesepio, Christus noster. Stella in aere, de qua habuimus in Evangelio: «Vidimus enim stellam ejus in oriente, et venimus adorare eum (Matth. II).» Stella in terra, de qua Balaam praedixit in prophetia sua: «Orietur stella ex Jacob, et confringet omnes alienigenas (Num. XXIV).» Sol in praesepio de quo reprobi, secundum quod in libro Sapientiae legitur, dicturi sunt in futuro: «Eravimus a via veritatis, et sol justitiae non illuxit nobis (Sap. V).» De quo Apostolus: «Sol non occidat super iracundiam vestram (Ephes. IV).» An non ipse est, qui «in sole posuit tabernaculum» suae carnis, quando fuit «tanquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo? (Psal. XVIII).»

In stella, fratres, quatuor principaliter attenduntur. Stella enim igneae naturae est; stella in se lucida est et clara; stella ex se radium emittit; stella in nocte lucet. Haec eadem in stella nostra, id est, in virgine Maria, possumus invenire. Stella, ut diximus, igneae naturae est [apparet ignea], et ipsa virgo Maria igneae naturae fuit. Ipsa est enim rebus ille igneus, in quo apparuit Dominus Moysi, qui videbatur quippe ardere, sed non comburebatur (Exod. III), quia gravida quidem apparuit Virgo, sed igne libidinis non est consumpta. Ipsa in se splendida est et clara, adeo ut de ea scriptum sit in Canticis canticorum: «Quae est ista, quae progreditur sicut aurora consurgens, pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol? (Cant. VI.)» Ipsa ex se radium illum emisit, qui penetrat usque ad cordis secreta. Scrutatur enim corda et renes (Jer. XVII; Rom. VIII; Apoc. II); eo quod vivus est sermo Dei, et efficax et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti, pertingens usque ad divisionem animae et spiritus (Hebr. IV); unde et merito congruit ei nominis interpretatio. Maria namque stella maris interpretatur, Mare hic mundus est, sicut scriptum est: «Hoc mare magnum et spatiosum, illic reptilia quorum non est numerus (Psal. CIII).» Merito ergo stella maris dicitur, quia ipsa tanquam sidus singulare refulsit in mundo, et cujus splendor illuminat mundum, et ex se radium illum emisit, qui «illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum (Joan. I).» Et sicut radius processit a stella, stella integra permanente; sic filius ex Virgine, virginitate inviolabili perdurante, secundum quod et propheta Ezechiel inquit: «Porta, quam vides, semper erit clausa, et nullus transibit per eam, sed Dominus solus introibit per eam (Ezech. XLIV).» Stella lucet in nocte, et ipsa Virgo in nocte hujus saeculi singulariter fulsit, secundum quod de ea scriptum est: «Quae cunctas haereses sola interemisti in universo mundo.» Talis est stella nostra, fratres, talis est virgo Maria, talis est stella maris, et quia reliquit nobis exemplum, ut sequamur vestigia ejus (I Petr. II), talis etiam debet esse anima nostra.

There was a star in the air, a star on earth, the sun in the manger. The star in the air, that lucid body; the star on earth, the Virgin Mary; the sun in the manger, our Christ. The star in the air, of which we had in the Gospel: "For we have seen his star in the east, and have come to adore him (Matth. II)." The star on earth, of which Balaam predicted in his prophecy: "A star shall rise out of Jacob, and shall crush all the foreigners (Num. XXIV)." The sun in the manger, of which the reprobate, according to what is read in the book of Wisdom, are to say in the future: "We have erred from the way of truth, and the sun of justice has not shone upon us (Wisd. V)." Of which the Apostle says: "Let not the sun go down upon your anger (Ephes. IV)." Is it not he who "set the tabernacle of his flesh in the sun," when he was "as a bridegroom coming out of his bridal chamber? (Psal. XVIII)."

In a star, brothers, four things are principally observed. For a star is of a fiery nature; a star is lucid and clear in itself; a star emits a ray from itself; a star shines in the night. These same things we can find in our star, that is, in the Virgin Mary. A star, as we have said, is of a fiery nature [appears fiery], and the Virgin Mary herself was of a fiery nature. For she herself is that fiery bush in which the Lord appeared to Moses, which indeed seemed to burn, but was not consumed (Exod. III), because the Virgin indeed appeared pregnant, but was not consumed by the fire of lust. She is splendid and clear in herself, so much so that it is written of her in the Song of Songs: "Who is she that comes forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun? (Cant. VI.)" She emitted that ray from herself, which penetrates even to the secrets of the heart. For he searches hearts and reins (Jer. XVII; Rom. VIII; Apoc. II); because the word of God is living and effectual and more piercing than any two-edged sword, reaching even to the division of the soul and the spirit (Hebr. IV); wherefore also the interpretation of her name fittingly agrees with her. For Mary is interpreted as star of the sea (stella maris). The sea is this world, as it is written: "This great and spacious sea, there are creeping things without number (Psal. CIII)." Fittingly, therefore, is she called star of the sea, because she herself shone as a singular star in the world, and whose splendor enlightens the world, and from herself emitted that ray, which "enlightens every man coming into this world (John I)." And just as the ray proceeded from the star, the star remaining whole; so the son from the Virgin, her inviolable virginity enduring, according to what also the prophet Ezekiel says: "The gate which you see shall always be shut, and no one shall pass through it, but the Lord alone shall enter through it (Ezech. XLIV)." The star shines in the night, and the Virgin herself shone singularly in the night of this world, according to what is written of her: "Who alone have destroyed all heresies in the whole world." Such is our star, brothers, such is the Virgin Mary, such is the star of the sea; and because she left us an example, that we may follow her footsteps (I Pet. II), such also ought our soul to be.

Simus ergo, fratres, igneae naturae, ut sit in nobis ille ignis, quem venit Dominus mittere in terram (Luc. XII): et ignis ille qui erat flammigerans in ossibus Jeremiae, accendatur in conflatorio cordis nostri, juxta quem sedet Dominus purgans et mundans filios Levi (Mal. III). Simus etiam et nos clari et fulgidi, ut aspiret nobis dies, et inclinentur umbrae (Cant. II, IV): et «deponentes veterem hominem cum actibus suis, induamur novum, qui secundum Deum creatus est (Col. III);» ut si fuimus aliquando tenebrae, nunc simus lux in Domino (Ephes. V): et induti armis lucis, ambulemus honeste, sicut decet ambulare in die (Rom. XIII). Emittamus etiam ex nobis, fratres, radium bonae operationis, quia scriptum est: «Sint lumbi vestri praecincti, et lucerna ardentes in manibus vestris (Luc. XII).» Lucernas quippe ardentes in manibus portamus, cum proximis nostris per exempla bonae operationis lucemus, ut cortina cortinam trahat; «et qui audit, dicat: Veni (Apoc. XXII);» et «sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videntes opera vestra bona glorificent Patrem, qui in coelis est (Matth. V),» et currant multi in odorem unguentorum nostrorum (Cant. I).

Stella lucet etiam in nocte, et nos, fratres, in nocte hujus saeculi luceamus, secundum quod scriptum est: «Inter quos lucetis, quasi luminaria fixa in firmamento (Phil. II).» Contra haereticorum tenebras sapientiae lumine splendeamus, quia scriptum est: «Capite nobis vulpeculas, quae demoliuntur vineam Domini (Cant. II).» Propter quod Dominus inquit: «Estote prudentes sicut serpentes, et simplices sicut columbae (Matth. X).» Sic ergo, fratres, ad verum solem poterimus pervenire, si Virginis et stellae nostrae vestigia fuerimus imitati.

In sole autem quinque principaliter attenduntur. Sol incommutabilis est in se, cum luna singulis mensibus commutetur. In sole est nulla macula, cum semper macula sit in luna. Sol habet plenitudinem luminis, a quo et alia luminaria lumen accipiunt. Sol licet sit immutabilis, interdum tamen patitur eclypsim. Sol semper lucet in die. Sed eadem in vero sole nostro sollicite investigemus. Sol in se incommutabilis est et ipse Christus secundum divinitatis potentiam semper incommutabilis perseverat. Unde ipse ait: «Ego sum Deus, et non mutor (Mal. III); apud quem non est transmutatio, nec vicissitudinis obumbratio (Jac. I).» In sole nulla est macula; et ipse est, qui singulariter ingressus est mundum sine macula «qui peccatum non fecit, nec inventus est dolus in ore ejus (Isai. LIII).» Sol habet plenitudinem luminis; et in eo habitavit plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter (Col. II), cui non est datus Spiritus ad mensuram (Joan. III), imo de plenitudine ejus accepimus omnes gratiam pro gratia (Joan. I), quando unguentum a capite descendit usque ad barbam, et a barba stillavit in oram vestimenti (Psal. CXXXII). Sol interdum patitur eclypsim; et ipse Christus eclypsim mortis passus est in passione, quando recessit Pastor ovium, ponens animam pro ovibus suis (Joan. X), «et inclinato capite emisit spiritum (Joan. XIX).»

Let us be, therefore, brothers, of a fiery nature, so that there may be in us that fire which the Lord came to cast upon the earth (Luke XII): and that fire which was flaming in the bones of Jeremiah, let it be kindled in the furnace of our heart, beside which the Lord sits purging and cleansing the sons of Levi (Mal. III). Let us also be clear and bright, so that the day may breathe for us, and the shadows may incline (Cant. II, IV): and "putting off the old man with his acts, let us put on the new, who is created according to God (Col. III);" so that if we were sometimes darkness, now we may be light in the Lord (Ephes. V): and clothed with the armor of light, let us walk honestly, as it becomes us to walk in the day (Rom. XIII). Let us also emit from ourselves, brothers, a ray of good operation, because it is written: "Let your loins be girt, and burning lamps in your hands (Luke XII)." We carry indeed burning lamps in our hands when we shine for our neighbors through examples of good operation, so that curtain may draw curtain; "and he who hears, let him say: Come (Apoc. XXII);" and "so let your light shine before men, that seeing your good works they may glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matth. V)," and many may run in the odor of our ointments (Cant. I).

The star also shines in the night, and let us, brothers, shine in the night of this world, according to what is written: "Among whom you shine as lights fixed in the firmament (Phil. II)." Against the darkness of heretics let us shine with the light of wisdom, because it is written: "Catch for us the little foxes that demolish the vineyard of the Lord (Cant. II)." For which reason the Lord says: "Be wise as serpents and simple as doves (Matth. X)." Thus, therefore, brothers, shall we be able to reach the true sun, if we shall have imitated the footsteps of the Virgin and our star.

In the sun, however, five things are principally observed. The sun is immutable in itself, while the moon is changed every month. In the sun there is no spot, while there is always a spot in the moon. The sun has fullness of light, from which other lights also receive light. The sun, although it is immutable, nevertheless sometimes suffers an eclipse. The sun always shines in the day. But let us carefully investigate these same things in our true sun. The sun in itself is immutable, and Christ himself according to the power of his divinity always remains immutable. Wherefore he himself says: "I am God, and I am not changed (Mal. III); with whom there is no change, nor shadow of vicissitude (Jas. I)." In the sun there is no spot; and it is he who singularly entered the world without spot, "who did no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth (Isai. LIII)." The sun has fullness of light; and in him dwelt the fullness of the divinity bodily (Col. II), to whom the Spirit was not given by measure (John III), rather from his fullness we have all received grace for grace (John I), when the ointment descended from the head even to the beard, and from the beard dripped to the hem of the garment (Psal. CXXXII). The sun sometimes suffers an eclipse; and Christ himself suffered the eclipse of death in his passion, when the Shepherd of the sheep departed, laying down his life for his sheep (John X), "and bowing his head, he gave up the ghost (John XIX)."

Sol semper lucet in die; et ipse Dominus, postquam resurgendo consumpsit tenebras nostrae mortalitatis, «resurgens ex mortuis jam non moritur, mors illi ultra non dominabitur (Rom. VI).» Sed lucem habitat inaccessibilem (I Tim. VI), et in eo tenebrae non sunt ullae (I Joan. I). Hunc solus aquila Joannes irreverberatis luminibus intuitus est in rota sua, quando adeo alte volavit, quod si paulo altius intonuisset, totus mundus eum capere non potuisset, inquiens: «In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum (Joan. I).»

Magi ergo illuminati a sole veniunt ad Solem, qui illustrati per stellam, quae lumen suum habet a sole, venerunt ad adorandum Solem; quorum gesta diligenter singula attendamus. Venerunt ergo ab oriente Hierosolymam, et cum venissent, inquisiverunt: «Ubi est qui natus est rex Judaeorum (Matth. II)?» Cum pervenissent ad locum, prociderunt; cum procidissent, adoraverunt; cum adorassent, munera obtulerunt. Venerunt ergo infatigabili labore, inquisiverunt provida sollicitudine, prociderunt debita humiliatione, adoraverunt mentis devotione, munera obtulerunt integra fidei religione; «et obtulerunt ei aurum, thus et myrrham (Ibid.).» Ecce primitiae gentium primo puram et integram fidem offerunt. Obtulerunt enim thus Deo, myrrham mortali, aurum regi. Thus per fidem divinitatis, myrrham per fidem humanitatis, sive mortalitatis, aurum per fidem regiae dignitatis. Fuit enim Deus et homo, Emmanuel, nobiscum Deus, cum factus est simul in unum dives et pauper, fuitque ex regia tribu, secundum quod in ejus genealogia describitur: «Liber generationis Jesu Christi filii David, filii Abraham (Matth. I),» etc.

Vel obtulerunt haec tria humanitati Christi, aurum regi, sacerdoti thus, myrrham mortali. Fuit enim ex regia et sacerdotali tribu. Fuit rex, quia habuit in vestimento, et in femore suo scriptum: «Rex regum, et Dominus dominantium (Apoc. XIX).» Fuit et sacerdos secundum ordinem Melchisedech (Psal. CIX) regis Salem, qui sacerdos fuit Dei summi (Genes. XIV; Hebr. VII), quia non per sanguinem hircorum, aut vitulorum, sed per proprium sanguinem introivit semel in sancta, aeterna redemptione inventa (Hebr. IX). «Conversi enim sumus ad pastorem et episcopum animarum nostrarum (I Petr. II).» Fuit etiam mortalis, quia «vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit (Isa. LIII)» in corpore suo super lignum.

The sun always shines in the day; and the Lord himself, after by rising he consumed the darkness of our mortality, "rising from the dead now dies no more, death shall no more have dominion over him (Rom. VI)." But he inhabits light inaccessible (I Tim. VI), and in him there are no darkness at all (I John I). Him alone the eagle John with unblinking eyes gazed upon in his wheel, when he flew so high that if he had thundered a little higher, the whole world could not have contained him, saying: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John I)."

The Magi, therefore, enlightened by the sun, come to the Sun; who, illustrated through the star which has its light from the sun, came to adore the Sun; whose deeds let us diligently observe one by one. They came therefore from the east to Jerusalem, and when they had come, they inquired: "Where is he who is born king of the Jews (Matth. II)?" When they had reached the place, they fell down; when they had fallen down, they adored; when they had adored, they offered gifts. They came therefore with indefatigable labor, they inquired with provident solicitude, they fell down with due humiliation, they adored with devotion of mind, they offered gifts with the integral religion of faith; "and they offered to him gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Ibid.)." Behold, the first-fruits of the nations first offer a pure and integral faith. For they offered frankincense to God, myrrh to a mortal, gold to a king. Frankincense through faith in his divinity, myrrh through faith in his humanity or mortality, gold through faith in his royal dignity. For he was God and man, Emmanuel, God with us, when he was made at once in one rich and poor, and was of a royal tribe, according to what is described in his genealogy: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matth. I)," etc.

Or they offered these three to the humanity of Christ: gold to the King, frankincense to the Priest, myrrh to the mortal. For he was of a royal and priestly tribe. He was King, because he had written on his garment and on his thigh: "King of kings, and Lord of lords (Apoc. XIX)." He was also a Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Psal. CIX), king of Salem, who was a priest of the most high God (Gen. XIV; Hebr. VII), because not through the blood of goats or calves, but through his own blood he entered once into the holy place, eternal redemption having been found (Hebr. IX). "For we are turned to the shepherd and bishop of our souls (I Pet. II)." He was also mortal, because "truly he has borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows (Isa. LIII)" in his body upon the wood.

Haec eadem ipsa Virgo, stella maris, obtulit Soli nato suo in persona sua. Obtulit enim aurum regiae dignitatis, quia fuit ipsa de regia tribu, secundum quod in dicta genealogia legitur: «Jacob genuit Joseph virum Mariae, de qua natus est Jesus, qui vocatur Christus (Matth. I).» Obtulit etiam thus et myrrham; unde in Cantico amoris haec duo in ipsa junguntur, ubi dicitur: «Quae est ista, quae ascendit per desertum sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrhae, et thuris, universi pulveris pigmentarii?» (Cant. III.) Myrrha arcet vermes a corporibus mortuorum, et ipsa corpora conservat a corruptione, propter quod Nicodemus attulit misturam myrrhae et aloes (Joan. XIX), ut condiret corpus Jesu. Per myrrham ergo carnis integritas designatur, thus vero mentis exprimit devotionem. Bene ergo hae duae species in stella, et virga nostra junguntur, quia in virgine Maria carnis integritas, et mentis devotio semper indivisa manserunt. Et merito additur: «universi pulveris pigmentarii;» quia ipsa adeo fuit donis Spiritus sancti referta, ut audire meruerit: «Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui (Luc. I).» Sic ergo, fratres, obtulerunt magi, obtulit et virgo Maria stella nostra. Et quia exempla dederunt nobis, ergo et nos ita faciamus.

Venerunt magi, veniamus et nos, quia scriptum est: «Venite ad me, omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos (Matth. XI).» Et alibi: «Venite ad me, qui concupiscitis me (Eccli. XXIV).» Inquisierunt magi, inquiramus et nos, quia scriptum est: «Quaerite Dominum, dum inveniri potest.» Prociderunt magi, procidamus et nos, quia scriptum est: «Venite, adoremus, et procidamus ante Deum (Psal. XCIV).» Adoraverunt magi, adoremus et nos, quia scriptum est: «Adorate Dominum in aula sancta ejus (Psal. XXVIII).» Obtulerunt magi, offeramus et nos, quia scriptum est: «Obsecro vos, fratres, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem, rationabile obsequium vestrum (Rom. XII).» Offeramus et nos illa tria, quae obtulerunt magi, aliter tamen quam illi.

Offeramus myrrham mortificationis, ut mortificantes corpora nostra, quae sunt super terram (Col. III), carnis curam non faciamus in desideriis, crucifigentes corpora nostra cum vitiis, et concupiscentiis (Gal. V); et in his tamen omnibus rationabile sit, ut dictum est, obsequium nostrum (Rom. XII). Offeramus thus devotae orationis, secundum quod Apostolus ait: «Orabo spiritu, orabo et mente; psallam spiritu, psallam et mente (I Cor. XIV),» ut, «dirigatur oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectu Domini (Psal. CXL).»

These same things the Virgin herself, the star of the sea, offered to the Sun born of her in her person. For she offered the gold of royal dignity, because she herself was of the royal tribe, according to what is read in the said genealogy: "Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ (Matth. I)." She also offered frankincense and myrrh; wherefore in the Song of Love these two are joined in her, where it is said: "Who is she that ascends through the desert like a rod of smoke from the aromatics of myrrh and frankincense, of all the powder of the perfumer?" (Cant. III.) Myrrh keeps worms from the bodies of the dead, and preserves the bodies themselves from corruption, for which reason Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes (John XIX), to anoint the body of Jesus. Through myrrh, therefore, integrity of the flesh is designated, while frankincense expresses devotion of the mind. Well, therefore, are these two species joined in our star and rod, because in the Virgin Mary integrity of the flesh and devotion of the mind always remained undivided. And fittingly it is added: "of all the powder of the perfumer;" because she herself was so filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, that she deserved to hear: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb (Luke I)." Thus, therefore, brothers, the magi offered, and the Virgin Mary our star offered. And because they gave us examples, therefore let us also do likewise.

The magi came, let us also come, because it is written: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you (Matth. XI)." And elsewhere: "Come to me, you who desire me (Eccli. XXIV)." The magi searched, let us also search, because it is written: "Seek the Lord while he may be found." The magi fell down, let us also fall down, because it is written: "Come, let us adore, and fall down before God (Psal. XCIV)." The magi adored, let us also adore, because it is written: "Adore the Lord in his holy court (Psal. XXVIII)." The magi offered, let us also offer, because it is written: "I beseech you, brothers, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, your reasonable service (Rom. XII)." Let us also offer those three things which the magi offered, yet in a different way than they did.

Let us offer the myrrh of mortification, so that mortifying our bodies which are upon the earth (Col. III), we may not care for the flesh in its desires, crucifying our bodies with their vices and lusts (Gal. V); and yet in all these things let our service be reasonable, as has been said (Rom. XII). Let us offer the frankincense of devout prayer, according to what the Apostle says: "I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the mind; I will sing with the spirit, I will sing also with the mind (I Cor. XIV)," so that, "my prayer may be directed like incense in the sight of the Lord (Psal. CXL)."

Offeramus et aurum, splendorem sapientiae; aurum namque sapientiam designat, juxta illud: «Thesaurus desiderabilis requiescit in ore sapientis (Prov. XXI),» ut simus parati omni poscenti de ea, quae in nobis est, fide, et spe reddere rationem, et splendore sapientiae fulgeamus, et contra haereticorum tenebras intrepidi dimicemus, atque dicere possimus: «Bonum mihi lex oris tui super millia auri et argenti (Psal. CXVIII).»

Et utinam non possetis dicere potius: Bonum mihi lex oris Justiniani super millia auri et argenti, «Narraverunt mihi iniqui fabulationes, sed non ita ut lex tua, Domine (Ibid.);» «dereliquerunt venam aquarum viventium Dominum (Jer. XVII),» ut merito ipsa sapientia conqueratur, dicens: «Dereliquerunt me fontem aquae vivae (Jer. II).» Nam hi qui in legem Domini debent meditari die ac nocte a veritate ad fabulas convertunt auditum.

Custodes ergo super muros ecclesiae constituti vigilantes sint, ne vulpes Samsonis incendant segetes nostras (Judic. XV); et ponatur turris David cum propugnaculis contra Damascum, ex qua dependeant clypei mille (Cantic. IV); turris namque fortissima nomen Domini; ad eam confugiet justus et exaltabitur (Prov. XVIII). Haec est scriptura, ubi nomen Domini invocatur, in qua propugnacula sunt praelati atque doctores, qui ejus terminos debent custodire, de quibus scribitur: «Non transgredieris terminos, quos tibi patres tui constituerunt (Prov. XXIV).» Statuit namque Moyses terminos contra montem Sinai, quo transgredi non licebat (Exod. XIX). Et utinam istos terminos nulli transgrediantur, alioquin lapidibus erunt digni. Ex hac pendent clypei mille, perfectio videlicet auctoritatum, quae est ad munimentum ipsius. Haec turris ponitur contra Damascum, scilicet contra robur haereticorum. Aliud fundamentum alius nemo potest ponere, praeter id quod positum est, quod est Christus Jesus (I Cor. III), id est mysterium Christi.

Immobile profecto et immutabile est Christi mysterium, quia multiplex habuit testimonium. Habuit enim testimonium hominum, testimonium mulierum, testimonium virorum, testimonium senum, testimonium terrenorum, testimonium coelorum, testimonium gentilium, testimonium Judaeorum, testimonium antiquorum, testimonium modernorum, testimonium lucis, testimonium tenebrarum, testimonium legis, testimonium prophetarum, testimonium regum, testimonium turbarum, testimonium vivorum, testimonium mortuorum, testimonium brutorum, testimonium solis, testimonium elementorum.

Let us also offer gold, the splendor of wisdom; for gold designates wisdom, according to that: "A desirable treasure rests in the mouth of the wise (Prov. XXI)," so that we may be ready to give a reason to everyone who asks concerning the faith and hope that is in us, and that we may shine with the splendor of wisdom, and fight undaunted against the darkness of heretics, and be able to say: "Better to me is the law of your mouth than thousands of gold and silver (Psal. CXVIII)."

And would that you could not say instead: Better to me is the law of the mouth of Justinian than thousands of gold and silver, "The wicked have told me fables, but not as your law, O Lord (Ibid.);" "they have forsaken the Lord, the vein of living waters (Jer. XVII)," so that deservedly Wisdom herself complains, saying: "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water (Jer. II)." For those who ought to meditate day and night on the law of the Lord turn away their hearing from the truth to fables.

Therefore, let the watchmen appointed over the walls of the church be vigilant, lest Samson's foxes set fire to our crops (Judic. XV); and let the tower of David be set with bulwarks against Damascus, from which a thousand shields may hang (Cant. IV); for the name of the Lord is a very strong tower; the just shall flee to it and be exalted (Prov. XVIII). This is the Scripture, where the name of the Lord is invoked, in which the bulwarks are the prelates and doctors, who ought to guard its boundaries, of whom it is written: "You shall not transgress the boundaries which your fathers have set for you (Prov. XXIV)." For Moses set boundaries against Mount Sinai, which it was not lawful to transgress (Exod. XIX). And would that no one transgress these boundaries, otherwise they will be worthy of stones. From this hang a thousand shields, namely, the perfection of authorities, which is for its defense. This tower is placed against Damascus, that is, against the strength of heretics. No one can lay another foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Christ Jesus (I Cor. III), that is, the mystery of Christ.

Truly immovable and immutable is the mystery of Christ, because it had a manifold testimony. For it had the testimony of men, the testimony of women, the testimony of men, the testimony of the elderly, the testimony of earthly things, the testimony of the heavens, the testimony of the Gentiles, the testimony of the Jews, the testimony of the ancients, the testimony of the moderns, the testimony of light, the testimony of darkness, the testimony of the law, the testimony of the prophets, the testimony of kings, the testimony of the crowds, the testimony of the living, the testimony of the dead, the testimony of brute animals, the testimony of the sun, the testimony of the elements.

Habuit testimonium hominum, quia pastores erant in regione illa, qui venientes invenerunt de verbo, sicut dictum erat ad eos de puero (Luc. II). Testimonium angelorum, qui angelus Domini stetit juxta illos, et dixit eis: «Ecce evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum, quia natus est hodie Salvator mundi, qui est Christus Dominus in civitate David (Ibid.).» Et facta est cum angelo multitudo coelestis exercitus, laudantium Deum, et dicentium: «Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis (Ibid.).»

Habuit testimonium mulierum, quia Anna prophetissa filia Phanuel confitebatur Domino, et loquebatur de illo omnibus qui exspectabant redemptionem Israel (Ibid.). Habuit testimonium virorum, quia uno die conversi sunt tria millia, et alio quinque millia (Act. II; IV), qui testimonium perhibebant de Jesu.

Habuit testimonium senum, quia antiquus ille dierum Simeon, cujus capilli erant sicut lana alba, qui acceperat responsum a Spiritu sancto non visurum se mortem nisi videret Christum Domini, accipiens eum in ulnas suas, dixit: «Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum, in pace, quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum (Luc. II).» Habuit testimonium parvulorum, quia Innocentes illi, eum quamvis non loquendo, moriendo tamen confessi sunt (Matth. II).

Habuit testimonium terrenorum, quia pax facta est in terra hominibus bonae voluntatis; tanta, ut ab uno homine Caesare Augusto totus orbis describeretur (Luc. II); de cujus tranquillitate Isaias inquit: «Conflabunt gladios suos in vomeres, et lanceas suas in falces (Isa. II).»

Habuit testimonium coelorum, quia coeli miserunt novam stellam, secundum quod habuimus in Evangelio: «Et ecce stella, quam viderant magi in oriente, antecedebat eos usque dum veniens staret supra, ubi erat Puer (Matth. II).» Habuit testimonium gentilium, quia magi venientes Hierosolymam dixerunt: «Ubi est, qui natus est rex Judaeorum (Matth. II).» Habuit testimonium Judaeorum, quia Herodes principes sacerdotum et scribas populi conveniens, sciscitabatur ab eis ubi Christus nasceretur; et illi dixerunt: «In Bethlehem Judae (Ibid.).»

Habuit testimonium antiquorum, quia in manibus prophetarum assimilatus est (Ose. XII); ipse enim est Agnus occisus ab origine mundi (Apoc. XIII). Habuit testimonium modernorum, unde et ipse discipulis inquit: «Eritis mihi testes in Hierusalem, et in omni Judaea, et Samaria et usque ad ultimum terrae (Act. I).»

Habuit testimonium lucis, quia claritas Dei circumfulsit pastores (Luc. II), et claritas stellae illustravit magos (Matth. II) Testimonium tenebrarum quia in morte ejus tenebrae factae sunt super universam terram (Matth. XXVII; Marc. XV; Luc. XXIII).

It had the testimony of men, because there were shepherds in that region, who, coming, found out about the word, as it had been told to them concerning the child (Luke II). The testimony of angels, for the angel of the Lord stood by them and said to them: "Behold, I evangelize to you a great joy, because today is born the Savior of the world, who is Christ the Lord in the city of David (Ibid.)." And there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will (Ibid.)."

It had the testimony of women, because Anna the prophetess, daughter of Phanuel, confessed to the Lord, and spoke of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Israel (Ibid.). It had the testimony of men, because in one day three thousand were converted, and in another five thousand (Acts II; IV), who bore testimony concerning Jesus.

It had the testimony of the elderly, because that ancient of days Simeon, whose hairs were like white wool, who had received a response from the Holy Spirit that he would not see death unless he saw the Christ of the Lord, receiving him into his arms, said: "Now you dismiss your servant, Lord, according to your word, in peace, because my eyes have seen your salvation (Luke II)." It had the testimony of little ones, because those Innocents, although not by speaking, yet by dying confessed him (Matth. II).

It had the testimony of earthly things, because peace was made on earth to men of good will; so great that by one man, Caesar Augustus, the whole world was described (Luke II); of whose tranquility Isaiah says: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into sickles (Isa. II)."

It had the testimony of the heavens, because the heavens sent a new star, according to what we had in the Gospel: "And behold the star, which the magi had seen in the east, went before them until, coming, it stood over where the Child was (Matth. II)." It had the testimony of the Gentiles, because the magi coming to Jerusalem said: "Where is he who is born king of the Jews (Matth. II)." It had the testimony of the Jews, because Herod, gathering the chief priests and the scribes of the people, inquired of them where Christ was to be born; and they said: "In Bethlehem of Judah (Ibid.)."

It had the testimony of the ancients, because he was prefigured in the hands of the prophets (Hos. XII); for he himself is the Lamb slain from the origin of the world (Apoc. XIII). It had the testimony of the moderns, wherefore he himself said to the disciples: "You shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the end of the earth (Acts I)."

It had the testimony of light, because the brightness of God shone around the shepherds (Luke II), and the brightness of the star enlightened the magi (Matth. II). The testimony of darkness because at his death darkness occurred over the whole earth (Matth. XXVII; Mark XV; Luke XXIII).

Habuit testimonium legis, quia Moyses dixit in lege: «Prophetam suscitabit vobis Deus de fratribus vestris; ipsum tanquam me audietis (Deut. XVIII).» Et alibi: «Et erit vita tua pendens in ligno; videbis, et non cognosces (Deut. XXVIII).» Testimonium prophetarum, quia Isaias ait: «Egredietur virga de radice Jesse, et flos de radice ejus ascendet, et requiescet super eum spiritus Domini (Isa. I).» Et alibi: «Ecce virgo concipiet, et pariet filium, et vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel (Isa. VII).» Baruch autem: Post haec, inquit, in terris visus est et cum hominibus conversatus est (Baruch. III). Ezechiel in ejus testimonio filius appellatus est (Ezech. II). Daniel ait: «Cum venerit Sanctus sanctorum, cessabit unctio vestra (Dan. IX).» Oseas in ejus testimonio accepit uxorem fornicariam (Ose. I). Habacuc dicit: «Cornua sunt in manibus ejus (Habac. III).» Jonas in ventre ceti ejus testimonium testatus est (Jon. II). Et quid discurram per singula? Nullus prophetarum exstitit, qui ei testimonium non perhiberet.

Testimonium regum; unde David rex: «Terra nostra dabit fructum suum (Psal. LXXXIV).» Et alibi: «Aperiatur terra, et germinet Salvatorem (Psal. XLV).» Et Salomon: «Osculetur me osculo oris sui, quia meliora sunt ubera tua vino, fragrantia unguentis optimis,» et: «Dum esset rex in accubitu suo, nardus mea dedit odorem suum (Cant. I).»

Testimonium turbarum, unde dixerunt in Evangelio: «Vidimus mirabilia hodie (Luc. V).» Et: «Nisi esset hic a Deo, non posset facere quod facit (Joan. IX):» propter quod voluerunt etiam eum rapere, et regem facere (Joan. VI).

Testimonium vivorum, quia illi duo, qui ibant in Emmaus, venerunt et narraverunt omnia quae eis acciderant (Luc. XXIV). Testimonium mortuorum, quia «multa corpora sanctorum, qui dormierant, surrexerunt et apparuerunt multis (Matth. XXVII).»

Testimonium brutorum, quia «cognovit bos possessorem suum, et asinus praesepe Domini sui (Isa. I).» Testimonium solis, quando ipse obscuratus est (Luc. XXIII). Testimonium elementorum, quia testimonium perhibuit terra, quando terraemotus magnus factus est (Matth. XXVII). Testimonium perhibuit aqua, quando siccis pedibus ambulavit super aquas (Joan. VI). Testimonium perhibuit aer, quando nubes suscepit eum ab oculis eorum, scilicet discipulorum (Act. I). Testimonium perhibuit ignis, quando angelus Domini descendit de coelo, et resplenduit facies ejus sicut fulgur (Matth. XXVIII); fulgur enim igneae naturae est.

It had the testimony of the law, because Moses said in the law: "God will raise up for you a prophet from among your brothers; him you shall hear as myself (Deut. XVIII)." And elsewhere: "And your life shall be hanging upon a tree; you shall see, and shall not know (Deut. XXVIII)." The testimony of the prophets, because Isaiah says: "A rod shall go forth from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall ascend from his root, and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him (Isa. I)." And elsewhere: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (Isa. VII)." And Baruch: After these things, he says, he was seen on earth and conversed with men (Baruch III). Ezekiel in his testimony was called son (Ezek. II). Daniel says: "When the Holy of holies comes, your anointing shall cease (Dan. IX)." Hosea in his testimony took a whorish wife (Hos. I). Habakkuk says: "Horns are in his hands (Habac. III)." Jonah in the belly of the whale witnessed to his testimony (Jon. II). And why should I go through each one? There was no prophet who did not bear testimony to him.

The testimony of kings; wherefore King David: "Our land shall yield her fruit (Psal. LXXXIV)." And elsewhere: "Let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Savior (Psal. XLV)." And Solomon: "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth, for your breasts are better than wine, fragrant with the best ointments," and: "While the king was at his repose, my spikenard gave forth its odor (Cant. I)."

The testimony of the crowds, wherefore they said in the Gospel: "We have seen wonders today (Luke V)." And: "Unless this man were of God, he could not do what he does (John IX):" on account of which they even wanted to seize him and make him king (John VI).

The testimony of the living, because those two who were going to Emmaus came and told all the things that had happened to them (Luke XXIV). The testimony of the dead, because "many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep arose and appeared to many (Matth. XXVII)."

The testimony of brute animals, because "the ox knew its owner, and the ass its master's crib (Isa. I)." The testimony of the sun, when it was darkened (Luke XXIII). The testimony of the elements, because the earth bore testimony, when a great earthquake occurred (Matth. XXVII). The water bore testimony, when he walked with dry feet upon the waters (John VI). The air bore testimony, when a cloud received him from their eyes, namely, the disciples' (Acts I). The fire bore testimony, when the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and his face shone like lightning (Matth. XXVIII); for lightning is of a fiery nature.

Quia ergo, fratres, mysterium crucis habuit testimonium omnium praedictorum, erubescat Judaeus infelix, qui negat Christum de Virgine natum; quia pastores Judaei invenerunt sicut dictum erat illis (Luc. I). Confundatur gentilis, qui dicit ligno: «Deus meus es; et lapidi: Tu me genuisti (Jer. II);» quia magi gentiles ipsum adoraverunt. Obmutescat haereticus, qui mysterio contradicit. Et omnis lingua confiteatur quia Dominus noster Jesus Christus in gloria est Dei Patris (Philip. II). Ad quam gloriam nos perducat ipse Dominus noster Jesus, qui cum sit splendor luminum, flos florum, vita morum, schola virtutum, et corona sanctorum, super choros angelorum regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

SERMO II.

DE TRANSLATIONE S. HILARII EPISCOPI PICTAVIENSIS ET CONFESSORIS (XIV JAN.).

Gaudeamus, et exsultemus, dilectissimi, dum ad recolenda beati Hilarii sublimia merita solemniter convenimus. Ipsa quippe nos insignis vocabuli dignitas provocat, ut mens nostra spirituali laetitia affecta plausibiliter hilarescat. Nihilominus et hoc dignum est ut, dum beati viri translationem colimus, ipsi quoque mentes nostras a terrenis desideriis ad coelestia transferamus, ut, dum glebam corporis ejus tenuemque pulvisculum tanto praeferri apud homines honore conspicimus, quantum gloriae pondus in coelestibus possideat, ubi verus, et incomparabilis honor est, mens nostra perpendat. Sed libet jam translationis hujus historiam succincte transcurrere, ut nulli deinceps de praeclarae solemnitatis hujus origine prorsus expediat dubitare.

Porro autem dum confessor Christi Fredelinus beati Hilarii monasterium, quod in Pictaviensi suburbio situm est, laudabiliter regeret ibique sanctae conversationis insignibus disciplinis et praeclara morum honestate polleret, beatus Hilarius illi per visionem manifestus apparuit, et inter alia nonnulla hoc illi quadam vivacis imperii auctoritate mandavit, ut videlicet ipse simul et Pictaviensis episcopus ad regem Francorum, qui tunc rerum moderabatur habenas, incunctanter accederent, et sumptus impendi, quibus ampliari et augustius fieri monasterium posset, fiducialiter postularent. Quibus verbis insuper addidit ut, instaurato noviter monasterio, locum sibi sanctus abbas congruum provideret, in quo corpus ejus, facta translatione, reconderent. Quos nimirum felicis oraculi legatione perfunctos, rex clementer ac benigne suscepit eisque magnifica regiae liberalitatis munera contulit.

Since, therefore, brothers, the mystery of the cross had the testimony of all the aforesaid, let the unhappy Jew be ashamed, who denies that Christ was born of the Virgin; because the Jewish shepherds found him just as it had been told to them (Luke I). Let the Gentile be confounded, who says to a piece of wood: "You are my God;" and to a stone: "You begot me (Jer. II);" because the Gentile magi adored him. Let the heretic be silent, who contradicts the mystery. And let every tongue confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father (Philip. II). To which glory may our Lord Jesus himself lead us, who, since he is the splendor of lights, the flower of flowers, the life of morals, the school of virtues, and the crown of saints, reigns over the choirs of angels for ages of ages. Amen.

SERMON II.

ON THE TRANSLATION OF ST. HILARY, BISHOP OF POITIERS AND CONFESSOR (JAN. 14).

Let us rejoice and exult, most beloved, while we solemnly assemble to recall the sublime merits of blessed Hilary. Indeed, the very dignity of his illustrious name provokes us, so that our mind, affected by spiritual joy, may plausibly cheer up. Nevertheless, this also is worthy: that while we celebrate the translation of the blessed man, we ourselves also translate our minds from earthly desires to heavenly ones, so that, while we see the remains of his body and his slight dust preferred with such honor among men, our mind may ponder what a weight of glory he possesses in the heavens, where there is true and incomparable honor. But it is pleasing now to run through the history of this translation succinctly, so that henceforth it may be expedient for no one to doubt at all concerning the origin of this pre-eminent solemnity.

Furthermore, while Fredelin, the confessor of Christ, was laudably ruling the monastery of blessed Hilary, which is situated in the suburb of Poitiers, and was flourishing there with the noble disciplines of holy conversation and distinguished honesty of character, blessed Hilary appeared clearly to him in a vision, and among several other things commanded him with a certain authority of lively command, namely, that he himself together with the bishop of Poitiers should go without delay to the king of the Franks, who then managed the reins of affairs, and confidently request that expenses be paid by which the monastery could be enlarged and made more august. To these words he added furthermore that, the monastery having been newly restored, the holy abbot should provide a suitable place for him, in which they might store his body after the translation had been made. Whom, having performed the embassy of the happy oracle, the king received clemently and benignly and bestowed upon them magnificent gifts of royal liberality.

A fundamentis ergo monasterium per latomos, ac coementarios denuo construentes, et impollucibiliter instaurantes ministri Domini tandiu coeptis indefessi laboribus institerunt, donec non modo surgentis structurae machinam ad consummationem usque perducerent, sed etiam utrinque parietes, hoc est, intus et extrinsecus, radiantis musivi decore vestirent. In quo videlicet opere, ubi regii muneris summa defecit, episcopus ex ecclesiasticis facultatibus supplere quod deerat non cessavit.

Tandem itaque monasterio non modo consummatae fabricae structura perfecto, verum etiam sacerdotalis officii benedictionibus dedicato, mox demoliti sunt tumulum in quo sanctum fuerat corpus humatum. Constituto igitur die, in quo sancta membra transferrent, praecedente nocte, dum episcopus simul et abbas in vigiliis et orationibus jugiter pernoctarent, repente conspiciunt, quod beati angeli de tumulo, qui jam terebratus fuerat, sanctum corpus educunt, et in locum, qui sibi praeparatus erat, propriis manibus inferunt.

His itaque peractis, beatus Hilarius sanctum Fredelinum per visionem admonuit, ut Scotigenam quemdam sibi cognatione propinquum in coenobii regimine substitueret; ipse vero ad Gallinariam insulam in honorem ejusdem beati Hilarii aedificaturus ecclesiam properaret. Qui beati sacerdotis imperio mox humiliter paruit, et non solum illud quod jussum fuerat, sed et alia quatuor monasteria in ejus honorem construxit. Quanquam beati Fredelini vita, in qua haec referri perhibetur historia, in manus nostras nequaquam devenerit, sed quod hic scriptum est, indicio nobis fraternae relationis innotuit.

Haec igitur hujus sacrae solemnitatis est causa, haec veneranda celebritatis hodiernae materia, ut in translatione sacri corporis merito gaudeat plebs devota fidelium, cui dependit exsequias exercitus angelorum. Porro autem ex occasione venerandae translationis hujus, et caetera beati viri gesta nobis in memoriam redeunt, ut quae longis ante temporibus sunt peracta, nostris nunc reducta conspectibus quodammodo recentia videantur et nova.

Mox enim ut disputare de venerabilis viri gestis incipimus, protinus occurrit memoriae quam impenetrabilis Ecclesiae murus haereticorum telis obstiterit, quam insuperabilis praeliator perversum Arianorum dogma gratia catholicae veritatis obtriverit. Nec illud vacat, quod cum adversus haereticorum perfidiam pugnaturus, Seleuciam Isauriae oppidum tenderet, puella gentilis divinitus edocta, tanti sacerdotis denuntiavit adventum, atque ideo cum patre Florentio, totaque familia divini baptismatis meruit suscipere sacramentum.

From the foundations, therefore, constructing the monastery anew through stonecutters and masons, and restoring it unpollutedly, the ministers of the Lord persisted untiring in the labors begun for so long, until they not only led the machine of the rising structure even to consummation, but also clothed the walls on both sides, that is, inside and outside, with the decorum of radiant mosaic. In which work, namely, where the sum of the royal gift failed, the bishop did not cease to supply what was missing from the ecclesiastical faculties.

Finally, the monastery being perfect not only in the structure of the finished fabric but also dedicated by the blessings of the priestly office, they soon demolished the mound in which the holy body had been buried. Therefore, the day having been appointed in which they would translate the holy limbs, on the preceding night, while the bishop and the abbot together spent the night continually in vigils and prayers, they suddenly saw that blessed angels led the holy body out of the tomb, which had already been bored through, and carried it with their own hands into the place which had been prepared for it.

These things being thus performed, blessed Hilary admonished holy Fredelin through a vision that he should substitute a certain Scot, related to him by kinship, in the rule of the monastery; and that he himself should hasten to the island of Gallinaria to build a church in honor of the same blessed Hilary. Who soon humbly obeyed the command of the blessed priest, and built not only that which had been ordered, but also four other monasteries in his honor. Although the life of blessed Fredelin, in which this history is said to be related, has in no way come into our hands, yet what is written here has become known to us by the evidence of a brotherly report.

This, therefore, is the cause of this sacred solemnity, this the venerable matter of today's celebration, that in the translation of the sacred body the devout people of the faithful may deservedly rejoice, to whom an army of angels pays funeral rites. Furthermore, on the occasion of this venerable translation, the other deeds of the blessed man also return to our memory, so that those things which were performed long ago, being now brought back to our sight, seem in some way recent and new.

For as soon as we begin to discuss the deeds of the venerable man, it immediately occurs to memory how impenetrable a wall of the Church stood against the darts of the heretics, how an insuperable warrior crushed the perverse dogma of the Arians with the grace of Catholic truth. Nor is it without weight that when he was about to fight against the perfidy of heretics and was going to the town of Seleucia in Isauria, a Gentile girl, divinely taught, announced the arrival of so great a priest, and therefore with her father Florentius and the whole family deserved to receive the sacrament of divine baptism.

Nec illud excidit insigne miraculum quod in Gallinaria insula immanium serpentium venenata rabies virtutem tam praeclari pontificis ferre non potuit, sed tanquam fulmineo fragore perterrita, vilis etiam baculi metam, quam ipse praefixerat, transcendere non praesumpsit.

Sed et illud memoriae consequenter occurrit quod idem egregius pontifex puerum sine gratia regenerationis exstinctum, non modo matri resuscitatum et incolumem reddidit, sed et verae fidei rudimentis instructum sanctae Ecclesiae filiis aggregavit.

Haec igitur, et alia multa virtutum ejus insignia nobis ex occasione venerandae hujus translationis occurrunt, quae nos ad amorem Dei et devotionem praeclari hujus sacerdotis accendunt. Plane cum multorum translationes justorum sancta veneretur Ecclesia, quae diligentia procuratae sunt hominum, quanto devotionis studio haec est solemniter recolenda, quae facta est manibus angelorum?

Sed quid est quod Moysi corpus ipse per se Dominus sepelivit (Deut. XXXIV), et tamen sepulcrum ejus hominibus innotescere noluit. Beati vero Hilarii corpus non modo coram hominibus per angelos transtulit, sed et in tanti honoris gloriam et totius Ecclesiae reverentiam sublimavit. De Moyse quippe scriptum est: «Mortuus est ibi Moyses servus Domini in terra Moab, jubente Domino; et sepelivit eum in valle terrae Moab contra Phogor; et non cognovit homo sepulcrum ejus usque in praesentem diem (ibid.).» Quid est ergo, quod ille nescitur, iste vero quotidie cum tanta gloria Christianae devotionis invisitur? Quid est, inquam, quod Moyses ab hominum notitia removetur, nisi ut tollatur occasio, ne qui tam Deo charus et familiaris exstitisse cognoscitur, divinus honor illi ab Israeliticae plebis perfidia praebeatur? Reliquorum vero sanctorum corpora non celantur, ut dum Christianae devotionis frequentantur accessu, et per illos fiant rutilantia signa virtutum, et istis accrescat felicium cumulus meritorum.

Praeterea nonnulli fideles idcirco post mortem tumulis editioribus includuntur, ut sui memoriam viventibus ingerant quatenus eis impendere pietatis opera non omittant. Hinc est quod sepultura vocatur ex more memoria, scilicet ut per eam memorentur vivi et percipiant refrigerium mortui.

Nor does that notable miracle fall from memory, that on the island of Gallinaria the poisonous madness of huge serpents could not bear the virtue of so distinguished a pontiff, but as if terrified by a thunderous crash, did not presume to cross the boundary of even a vile staff, which he himself had fixed.

But also it subsequently occurs to memory that the same excellent pontiff not only returned to his mother, resurrected and unharmed, a boy who had died without the grace of regeneration, but also, having instructed him in the rudiments of the true faith, added him to the sons of the holy Church.

These, therefore, and many other signs of his virtues occur to us on the occasion of this venerable translation, which kindle us to the love of God and devotion to this illustrious priest. Clearly, since the holy Church venerates the translations of many just men, which have been procured by the diligence of men, with how much study of devotion is this one to be solemnly recalled, which was made by the hands of angels?

But why is it that the Lord himself by himself buried the body of Moses (Deut. XXXIV), and yet did not want his sepulcher to become known to men. But the body of blessed Hilary he not only translated before men through angels, but also exalted it to the glory of such great honor and the reverence of the whole Church. For concerning Moses it is written: "Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, by the command of the Lord; and he buried him in the valley of the land of Moab opposite Phogor; and no man knew his sepulcher even to the present day (ibid.)." Why is it, therefore, that he is unknown, but this one is visited daily with such glory of Christian devotion? Why is it, I say, that Moses is removed from the knowledge of men, unless it be to take away the occasion, lest divine honor be given to him by the perfidy of the Israelite people, since he is known to have been so dear and familiar to God? But the bodies of the other saints are not hidden, so that while they are frequented by the approach of Christian devotion, both glowing signs of virtues may occur through them, and the heap of happy merits may increase for these [the faithful].

Furthermore, some faithful are for this reason enclosed in more prominent tombs after death, so that they may urge their memory upon the living, lest they omit to bestow works of piety upon them. Hence it is that a burial is customarily called a memorial, namely so that by it the living may remember and the dead may receive refreshment.

Sed quid est, quod nonnulli sanctorum tantopere studuerunt suis providere sepulcra corporibus? Abraham nempe quadringentis argenti siclis a filiis Heth speluncam duplicem comparat (Gen. XXIII), Jacob et Joseph ad eamdem speluncam totum jam animi desiderium tendunt, et corpora sua post obitum illo perferenda deposcunt (Gen. XLIX et L). Quid ergo est quod sancti patriarchae, qui se pulverem et cinerem esse perspicue perhibent, qui certe corpora et corporalia quaeque coelestium contemplatione despiciunt, in Chananaeorum terra corpora sua quiescere tanto desiderio concupiscunt? Cur illum prae caeteris mundi partibus quieti suae praevident locum, nisi quod humanae salutis Auctorem illic noverant de suo semine nasciturum? Hinc est quod Jacob filium suum Joseph obsecrat, dicens: «Si inveni gratiam in conspectu tuo, pone manum tuam sub femore meo, et facies mihi misericordiam et veritatem, ut non sepelias me in Aegypto; sed dormiam cum patribus meis, et auferas me de terra hac, condasque in sepulcro majorum meorum (Gen. XLVII).» Cur autem ad confirmandae sponsionis indicium, Jacob manum filii supponi suis femoribus petiit, nisi quia illum, qui summa veritas est, de proprio semine propagandum esse cognovit? Illis igitur terrae finibus beati viri jam medullitus aggliscebant, quam per spiritum jam cernebant Salvatoris vestigiis atteri, quam in interioribus oculis jam videbant pretioso Dominici corporis sanguine purpurari, ut illic eorum corpora suam exspectarent resurrectionem, ubi resurrecturum esse cognoscebant ipsum beatae resurrectionis auctorem.

Ad hunc et nos, dilectissimi, perspicuam nostrae mentis aciem dirigamus. Ad hunc, dum pedum progressione non possumus, aestuantis desiderii festinatione tendamus, et dum sanctorum quorumlibet reliquiis dignae devotionis reverentiam exhibemus, ad illum unum et singulare corpus nostrae mentis dirigamus obtutum, quod in paternae majestatis gloria credimus ineffabiliter sublimatum.

Illa nimirum est terra cui tum beati patriarchae atque prophetae suspirabant, lacte scilicet et melle mananti. Lac siquidem de carnis uberibus profluit, mel vero de superioribus venit. Et quia substantia Dominici corporis ex Virginis visceribus prodiit, divinitas autem ex paterna majestate descendit, recte corpus Salvatoris terra dicitur repromissionis. Quae nimirum terra lacte, simul ac melle fluere dicitur, quia in Redemptoris nostri corpore, et substantia vere et dulcedo est ineffabilis deitatis.

But why is it that some of the saints strove so much to provide sepulchers for their bodies? For Abraham bought a double cave from the sons of Heth for four hundred shekels of silver (Gen. XXIII); Jacob and Joseph already directed the whole desire of their mind toward the same cave, and requested that their bodies be carried there after death (Gen. XLIX and L). What is it then that the holy patriarchs, who clearly maintain that they are dust and ashes, and who certainly despise bodies and all bodily things through the contemplation of heavenly things, long for with such desire that their bodies rest in the land of the Canaanites? Why do they foresee that place for their rest before other parts of the world, unless it be because they knew that the Author of human salvation was to be born there from their seed? Hence it is that Jacob beseeches his son Joseph, saying: "If I have found grace in your sight, put your hand under my thigh, and you shall do me mercy and truth, that you do not bury me in Egypt; but I will sleep with my fathers, and you shall take me away from this land, and bury me in the sepulcher of my ancestors (Gen. XLVII)." But why, for a sign of confirming the pledge, did Jacob ask that his son's hand be placed under his thighs, unless because he knew that he who is supreme truth was to be propagated from his own seed? Therefore, the blessed men were already longing in their innermost hearts for those boundaries of the land, which through the spirit they already perceived would be worn by the Savior's footsteps, which with their inner eyes they already saw being purpled by the precious blood of the Lord's body, so that their bodies might await their resurrection there, where they knew that the author of the blessed resurrection himself was to rise again.

Toward him let us also, most beloved, direct the sharp sight of our mind. Toward him, when we cannot by the progression of feet, let us hasten by the speed of burning desire, and while we exhibit reverence of worthy devotion to the relics of any saints, let us direct the gaze of our mind to that one and singular body, which we believe to be ineffably exalted in the glory of paternal majesty.

That is surely the land for which the blessed patriarchs and prophets then sighed, flowing indeed with milk and honey. For milk flows from the breasts of the flesh, but honey comes from higher places. And because the substance of the Lord's body came forth from the Virgin's vitals, but the divinity descended from the paternal majesty, rightly the Savior's body is called the land of promise. Which land is surely said to flow with milk as well as honey, because in our Redeemer's body there is both true substance and the sweetness of ineffable deity.

«In ipso enim, sicut Apostolus ait, habitat omnis plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter (Col. II): et alibi, «Deus erat in Christo mundum reconcilians sibi (II Cor. V).» Ad hanc viventium terram ille nos dignetur inducere, qui terrae nostrae mortalia non dedignatus est tolerare, quatenus sic ibi lacte et melle vescamur ut Salvatoris nostri praesentia et melliflua divinitatis ejus dulcedine satiemur. Qui cum Deo Patre, et Spiritu sancto vivit, et regnat per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

SERMO III.

DE SANCTO ANASTASIO MONACHO ET MARTYRE (XXI MART.).

Ad pulchrum, fratres charissimi, convenimus hodierna festivitate spectaculum, cum viderimus verum David nostrum praedam de cruenti leonis faucibus rapientem (I Reg. XVII), imo cum lasso puero de Amalecitarum cuneis invictissime triumphantem (I Reg. XV). Beatus enim Anastasius, ut ejus testatur historia, magi exstitit filius, et paternis insuper fuerat sacrilegiis institutus. Leonis igitur faucibus tenebatur, cum sacrilegae artis praestigiis uteretur; sed fortior superveniens vicit inimicum, et omnia arma, in quibus confidebat, abstulit (Luc. XI): sicque ovem errantem ad ovile proprium reportavit (Joan. X).

Stulta quidem mundi elegit Deus, ut confunderet sapientes (I Cor. I): sed et si quos reperit sapientes, prius eos a vano superbae sapientiae suae tumore dejecit, ac deinceps in auctoritatem liberae praedicationis erexit (Matth. X), ut idipsum postmodum constanter astruerent quod anxiabantur antea crudeliter impugnare. Quod Moyses tunc mystice figuravit, cum arripiens vitulum aureum, igne combussit, ad pulverem usque contrivit fluctibusque conspergens, Israeliticum ex eo populum propinavit (Exod. XXXII).

Quid est enim per figuram vitulus ille conflatilis, nisi corpus diaboli, homines scilicet in omnibus gentibus perfidiae, simul et idololatriae errore decepti ac sub ipso suo pestifero capite tanquam diversa membra sacrilega conspiratione conjuncti? Super quos nimirum ille nequitiae spiritus, velut auctor praesidens, insolenter erigitur, et tanquam caput per tyrannidem suo corpori dominatur. Aureus autem vitulus fuisse describitur, quia videtur idololatriae ritus velut a sapientibus institutus. Auro quippe sapientia designatur, sicut per Salomonem dicitur: «Thesaurus desiderabilis in ore sapientis (Prov. XXI).»

"For in him, as the Apostle says, dwells all the fullness of the divinity bodily (Col. II):" and elsewhere, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (II Cor. V)." To this land of the living may he deign to lead us, he who did not disdain to tolerate the mortal things of our earth, so that we may thus feed there on milk and honey, that we may be satisfied with our Savior's presence and the mellifluous sweetness of his divinity. Who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns through all ages of ages. Amen.

SERMON III.

ON SAINT ANASTASIUS, MONK AND MARTYR (MARCH 21).

To a beautiful spectacle, most dearly beloved brothers, we assemble in today's festivity, when we see our true David snatching the prey from the jaws of the bloody lion (I Sam. XVII), indeed triumphing most invincibly with the weary boy over the ranks of the Amalekites (I Sam. XV). For blessed Anastasius, as his history testifies, was the son of a magus, and furthermore had been instructed in his father's sacrileges. He was held, therefore, in the jaws of the lion, while he was using the deceits of the sacrilegious art; but a stronger one coming upon him conquered the enemy, and took away all the arms in which he trusted (Luke XI): and thus he brought back the straying sheep to his own fold (John X).

God chose the foolish things of the world that he might confound the wise (I Cor. I): but also if he found any who were wise, he first cast them down from the vain swelling of their proud wisdom, and afterwards raised them up into the authority of free preaching (Matth. X), so that they might thereafter constantly maintain that very thing which they previously were anxious to cruelly attack. Which Moses then mystically figured, when taking the golden calf, he burned it with fire, ground it even to powder, and scattering it on the waves, gave it to the Israelite people to drink (Exod. XXXII).

For what is that molten calf by figure, but the body of the devil, namely men in all nations deceived by the error of perfidy and idolatry at once, and joined under their own pestiferous head like diverse members in a sacrilegious conspiracy? Above whom surely that spirit of wickedness, like a presiding author, is insolently raised up, and rules over his body as a head through tyranny. And the calf is described as having been golden, because the rite of idolatry seems to have been instituted as if by wise men. For by gold wisdom is designated, as it is said through Solomon: "A desirable treasure in the mouth of the wise (Prov. XXI)."

Aureus itaque fuit vitulus, quia mundi sapientes ante novae gratiam fidei daemoniacae culturae fuisse probantur auctores, de quibus nimirum dicit Apostolus: «Quia cum cognovissent Deum, non sicut Deum glorificaverunt, aut gratias egerunt; sed evanuerunt in cogitationibus suis, et obscuratum est insipiens cor eorum, dicentes enim se esse sapientes, stulti facti sunt; et mutaverunt gloriam incorruptibilis Dei in similitudinem imaginis corruptibilis hominis, et volucrum, et quadrupedum et serpentium (Rom. I).» Per hanc itaque vesanae sapientiae vanitatem poetae philosophi, magi, siderum rimatores omniumque disciplinarum liberarum instructi peritia, prodigiosa solebant adorare figmenta daemoniorum. In vitulo igitur significatum est totum corpus, id est omnis societas gentilium idololatriae deditorum.

Moyses itaque vitulum igne combussit: quia Redemptor noster, quem ille signaverat, male conspirata corda gentilium flamma suae charitatis accendit. Unde et ipse ait: «Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur? (Luc. XII.)» Et Propheta: «Non est, inquit, qui se abscondat a calore ejus (Psal. XVIII).» In mente ergo gentilium repente divinus ignis accenditur, ut in eis irrationabilis idololatriae bestialis forma solvatur.

Totum deinde corpus vituli hujus in pulverem comminuitur, quia gentilis illa societas diabolicae conspirationis in unum arte conflata, ad adventum Christi quodam velut malleo salutiferae correptionis extusa atque a rigoris sui duritia divini verbi est virtute contrita. Ad verbum siquidem veritatis salubriter comminuitur, quae male integra in superbiae forma insensibiliter stare videbatur. Deinde in aquam spargitur, ut Israeliticus ex eo populus bibat. Comminutus denique vitulus in aquam mittitur, quia humiliatus gentilis populus, lavacro salutiferi fontis necesse est abluatur. Quem protinus Israelitae bibunt, quia sancti praedicatores Evangelii, qui veri Israelitae sunt, quos ad Dominicum corpus, quod est Ecclesia, transferunt in sua membra suscipiendo quasi bibendo convertunt. Quorum videlicet Israelitarum primo dictum est: «Macta et manduca (Act. X).» Quod tantumdem est ac si diceretur: Tere et bibe. Sic, sic ille vitulus per ignem zeli, et aciem verbi aquamque baptismatis ab eis potius absorptus est quos conatus est absorbere; in eos ipse transfusus est quos in sua, hoc est diabolica, tentaverat membra transferre.

Therefore the calf was golden, because the wise of the world, before the grace of the new faith, are proved to have been authors of demonic worship, concerning whom the Apostle indeed says: "Because when they had known God, they did not glorify him as God, nor gave thanks; but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened; for saying that they were wise, they became fools; and they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of corruptible man, and of birds, and of quadrupeds and of serpents (Rom. I)." Through this vanity of insane wisdom, poets, philosophers, magi, scrutinizers of the stars, and those instructed in the expertise of all the liberal disciplines, used to adore prodigious figments of demons. In the calf, therefore, the whole body was signified, that is, the whole society of Gentiles devoted to idolatry.

Moses, therefore, burned the calf with fire: because our Redeemer, whom he had signified, set on fire the evilly conspired hearts of the Gentiles with the flame of his charity. Wherefore he himself says: "I came to cast fire on the earth, and what do I wish, but that it be kindled? (Luke XII)." And the Prophet: "There is no one," he says, "who hides himself from its heat (Psal. XVIII)." In the mind of the Gentiles, therefore, the divine fire is suddenly kindled, so that in them the bestial form of irrational idolatry may be dissolved.

Then the whole body of this calf is ground into powder, because that Gentile society of diabolical conspiracy, fused into one by art, was hammered out at the coming of Christ as if by a hammer of salutary correction and was crushed from the hardness of its rigor by the power of the divine word. Indeed, that which seemed to stand insensibly whole in a form of pride is healthfully crushed at the word of truth. Then it is scattered in the water, so that the Israelite people may drink from it. Finally, the crushed calf is put into the water, because the humbled Gentile people must be washed in the laver of the salutary fountain. Whom the Israelites drink immediately, because the holy preachers of the Gospel, who are the true Israelites, convert those whom they transfer to the body of the Lord, which is the Church, by receiving them into their members as if by drinking. To which Israelites it was first said: "Slay and eat (Acts X)." Which is as much as if it were said: Grind and drink. Thus, thus that calf, through the fire of zeal, the edge of the word, and the water of baptism, was rather absorbed by those whom it tried to absorb; it was itself transfused into those whom it had tried to transfer into its own, that is, diabolical members.

Verumtamen, quia Moyses non in hoc metam ultionis fixit, ut idolum duntaxat infringeret, sed insuper addidit ut et viginti tria millia hominum trucidaret (Exod. XXXII), mystice docuit nequaquam sufficere, si ab idololatriae cultu, vel pravitate vitae quisque convertitur, nisi et propria vitia gladio spiritus mortificare conetur. Unde et praedicator egregius: «Mortificate, inquit, membra vestra, quae sunt super terram, fornicationem, immunditiam, luxuriam, concupiscentiam malam et avaritiam, quae est idolorum servitus (Col. III).»

Et notandum quia sicut hic vitia membra nostra esse dicuntur, ita et illic, perempti sunt, cum interfectoribus suis propinquitatis necessitudine jungebantur. Sicut per Moysen dictum est: «Haec dicit Dominus Deus Israel: Ponat vir gladium super femur suum; ite, et redite de porta usque in portam per medium castrorum, et occidat unusquisque fratrem, et amicum et proximum suum (Exod. XXXII).» Si quem ergo delectat in arma consurgere, quisquis anhelat adversus hostium cuneos dimicare, vertat manus in se, et illic plures inveniet adversarios obtruncandos, unde videlicet post victoriam non homicidae foedum nomen incurrat, sed gloriosus potius triumphator appareat, unde certe non sanctuarii mereatur excludi liminibus, sed consecrans semetipsum Domino, divinae gratiae benedictionibus augeatur; sicut et illis dictum est: «Consecrastis, inquit, manus vestras hodie Domino, unusquisque in filio et fratre suo; ut detur vobis benedictio (Ibid.).»

Quod autem ii qui caesi sunt viginti tria millia fuisse perhibentur, numerus trium millium peremptorum triplicem formam indicat peccatorum. Omne quippe peccatum aut facto, aut verbo, aut cogitatione committimus. Sed quoniam illic et denarius numerus geminatur, datur intelligi quia, sicut Decalogum praeceptorum culpa carnis simul et animae servare contempsimus, sic etiam utriusque vitia virtutum armis atterere et mortificare debemus.

Beatus igitur Anastasius tunc magus, tanquam aureus vitulus contritus est malleo praedicationis et transfusus est in membra corporis Christi, mox autem ut divini baptismatis adeptus est sacramentum, continuo, juxta Apostolum, non acquievit carni et sanguini (Galat. I), sed fervens in Spiritu sancto, vere in se resurrectionis insignia mutatis moribus ostendebat. Nec mirum. Sicut enim Seth, qui videlicet primi fuerat hominis filius (Gen. V), Hebraice resurrectione dicitur; ita et Anastasius de Graeca in nostram linguam, resurrectionis filius interpretatur. Convenienter itaque filius resurrectionis dicitur, quia mortuus est in eo magus atque sacrilegus, pro surrexit verae fidei Christianus, tantoque sancti Spiritus igne succensus est, ut in ipso mox suae conversionis exordio protinus martyrium anxius quaereret, ad martyrii certamen totis visceribus aestuaret.

However, because Moses did not fix the goal of vengeance in this, as if to only break the idol, but added furthermore that he should slaughter twenty-three thousand men (Exod. XXXII), he mystically taught that it is in no way sufficient if anyone is converted from the worship of idolatry or depravity of life, unless he also strives to mortify his own vices with the sword of the spirit. Wherefore also the excellent preacher says: "Mortify your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence, and avarice, which is the service of idols (Col. III)."

And it should be noted that just as here the vices are said to be our members, so also there, they were slain when they were joined to their slayers by a bond of kinship. As was said through Moses: "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: Let every man put his sword upon his thigh; go and return from gate to gate through the middle of the camp, and let every man kill his brother, and friend, and neighbor (Exod. XXXII)." If anyone, therefore, delights to rise up in arms, whoever pants to fight against the ranks of the enemies, let him turn his hands upon himself, and there he will find more adversaries to be cut down, from which truly after victory he may not incur the foul name of a murderer, but rather appear as a glorious triumpher, from which certainly he may not deserve to be excluded from the thresholds of the sanctuary, but consecrating himself to the Lord, he may be increased by the blessings of divine grace; as it was also said to them: "You have consecrated," he says, "your hands today to the Lord, every man in his son and in his brother; that a blessing may be given to you (Ibid.)."

Regarding the fact that those who were slain are reported to have been twenty-three thousand, the number of three thousand slain indicates the triple form of sins. For we commit every sin either by deed, or by word, or by thought. But since the number ten is also doubled there, it is given to be understood that, just as we have despised keeping the Decalogue of precepts by the fault of both flesh and soul, so also we ought to crush and mortify the vices of both with the weapons of virtues.

Blessed Anastasius, then a magus, was therefore crushed like the golden calf by the hammer of preaching and was transfused into the members of the body of Christ, and as soon as he obtained the sacrament of divine baptism, he immediately, according to the Apostle, did not yield to flesh and blood (Galat. I), but fervent in the Holy Spirit, truly showed in himself the signs of resurrection by changed habits. And no wonder. For just as Seth, who was the son of the first man (Gen. V), is called "resurrection" in Hebrew; so also Anastasius is translated from the Greek into our language as "son of resurrection." Fittingly, therefore, he is called son of resurrection, because the magus and the sacrilegious man died in him, and in his place rose the Christian of true faith, and he was kindled with such fire of the Holy Spirit that in the very beginning of his conversion he immediately sought martyrdom anxiously, and burned with all his vitals for the struggle of martyrdom.

Quid plura? Tandem ad judicem tractus, modo blanditiis attentatur, modo minarum asperitatibus deterretur; sed miles Christi, qui supra firmam petram fidei suae fundamenta posuerat, inter minaces fluctus et procellarum circumfrementium turbines immobilis persistebat, eodemque animo et despiciebat prospera et calcabat adversa; eoque modo bellator strenuus pellebat a pavidorum mente formidinem, et rudes tyronum animos ad agonem divini certaminis accendebat. Quod etiam per Moysen in lege praeceptum est: «Appropinquante, inquit, jam praelio stabit sacerdos ante aciem, et sic loquetur ad populum: Audi, Israel. Vos hodie contra inimicos vestros pugnam committitis, non pertimescat cor vestrum, nolite metuere, nolite cedere, nec formidetis eos, quia Dominus Deus vester in medio vestri est et pro vobis contra adversarios dimicabit, ut eruat vos de periculo (Deut. XX).»

Et notandum quod sacerdos, qui imminente jam bello concionatur, non alibi, sed ante aciem stare praecipitur, ut videlicet eos ad pugnam, quos adhortationibus provocat, ipse quoque praevius antecedat, ne dum alios ad bellum impellere nititur, ipse degeneri torporis otio per negligentiam resolvatur. Sicut de quibusdam magna quidem praedicantibus, sed desidiose viventibus, per Prophetam dicitur: «Filii Ephrem intendentes arcum et mittentes sagittas suas conversi sunt in die belli (Psalm. LXXVII).» Qui enim adversus vitiorum tentationes ad conflictum alios provocant, sed confligere ipsi sub ignobili desidiae languore detrectant, ii nimirum sagittas quidem dirigunt, sed post terga conversi, consummatae victoriae titulos non merentur; nec eis prodest quod bene coeperant, quia non usque ad finem magnanimiter perseverant. Unde et de illis protinus sequitur: «Non custodierunt testamentum Dei et in lege ejus noluerunt ambulare (Ibid.).» Ac si diceret, susceperunt quidem testamentum, sed non custodierunt; posuerunt in lege pedem per initium, sed non tenuerunt perseverantiae gressum.

Quisquis ergo ad spirituale certamen alios provocat, quisquis ad fortiter agendum proximorum mentes instigat, debet utique vitam concordare cum lingua, ne, dum aliis proponit excelsa, ipse contentus imis prematur inertia. Hinc est quod in lege praecipitur: «Non habetis, inquit, in sacculo diversa pondera, majus, et minus; nec erit in domo tua modius major, et minor; pondus habetis justum et verum, et modius aequalis et verus erit tibi (Deut. XXV).»

What more? Finally dragged before the judge, he is now tried with flatteries, now deterred by the harshness of threats; but the soldier of Christ, who had placed the foundations of his faith upon a firm rock, persisted immovable among the threatening waves and the whirlwinds of surrounding storms, and with the same mind both despised prosperity and trampled upon adversity; and in that way the strenuous warrior drove away fear from the minds of the fearful, and kindled the crude minds of the recruits for the struggle of the divine contest. Which was also commanded through Moses in the law: "When the battle is now approaching," he says, "the priest shall stand before the battle line, and thus shall he speak to the people: Hear, O Israel. You today join battle against your enemies, let not your heart fear, do not be afraid, do not yield, nor dread them, because the Lord your God is in the midst of you and will fight for you against your adversaries, that he may rescue you from danger (Deut. XX)."

And it should be noted that the priest, who harangues when war is already imminent, is commanded to stand not elsewhere, but before the battle line, so that, namely, he himself also may go before as a leader those whom he provokes to battle by his exhortations, lest while he strives to impel others to war, he himself be dissolved by negligence into the leisure of degenerate torpor. As is said through the Prophet concerning some who indeed preach great things, but live lazily: "The sons of Ephraim, bending the bow and shooting their arrows, turned back in the day of battle (Psalm LXXVII)." For those who provoke others to conflict against the temptations of vices, but themselves refuse to conflict under the ignoble languor of sloth, those indeed direct arrows, but having turned their backs, they do not deserve the titles of consummated victory; nor does it profit them that they had begun well, because they do not magnanimously persevere to the end. Wherefore also concerning them it immediately follows: "They did not keep the covenant of God and in his law they would not walk (Ibid.)." As if he were saying, they indeed received the covenant, but they did not keep it; they set their foot in the law at the beginning, but they did not keep the step of perseverance.

Whoever, therefore, provokes others to the spiritual struggle, whoever instigates the minds of his neighbors to act bravely, ought by all means to harmonize his life with his tongue, lest, while he proposes high things to others, he himself, content with the lowest things, be weighed down by inertia. Hence it is that in the law it is commanded: "You shall not have," it says, "in your bag diverse weights, a greater and a less; nor shall there be in your house a greater and a less bushel; you shall have a just and true weight, and an equal and true bushel shall be to you (Deut. XXV)."

Enimvero tunc in sacculo diversa pondera non habemus, si intra secretum conscientiae nostrae non aliter de nobis atque aliter de aliis judicantes, easdem legalium praeceptorum mensuras appendimus. Nimirum, ut non aliis regulam districtae severitatis indicere, nosmetipsos vero studeamus remissioris indulgentiae lege tractare. De qua videlicet fraude et Salomon dicit: «Abominatio est Domino pondus duplex et statera dolosa (Prov. XX).» Necesse est ergo fruges verbi, nequaquam diversis, sed eisdem metiri ponderibus, ut quae aliis agenda praecipimus, ipsi etiam vivis operibus efficaciter impleamus. Quod profecto beatus martyr Anastasius laudabiliter fecit, quia dum alios adhortatur ad pugnam, ipse prior arma corripuit, et in ipsam se constipatae legionis aciem lorica fidei munitus immersit; dumque aliis congrediendi praebet exemplum, ille sortitur ex devicto hoste triumphum; atque, ut ita loquar, dum sequentibus sternit iter ad pugnam, ipse mox peracta victoria perducitur ad coronam.

Hunc itaque, dilectissimi, sequamur fortissimum videlicet coelestis militiae bellatorem, ut vitiorum certemus semper edomare tyrannides, ut rebelles illecebrarum carnalium enitamur compescere voluptates, ut nobilis animus summis semper intentus, coelestia fervidus appetat, terrena contemnat, ut adversa perpeti pro veritate non timeat, ut solam Creatoris sui gratiam promereri medullitus concupiscat. Hinc enim vir Domini beatus Anastasius, ut de pluribus pauca perstringam, carceres horrificos pertulit, famis, sitis, frigoris omniumque necessitatum inopiam toleravit, verbera contempsit, tandemque post immania poenarum, suppliciorumque tormenta, in flumine necatus occubuit, eodemque elemento vitam carnis amisit quo videlicet antea vitae aeternae sacramenta perceperat. Bene itaque magus, quia in magis mundi Redemptor adveniens fidei suae primitias dedicavit.

Gloriam, et honorem Deo nostro, secundum Psalmistam, laetis mentibus afferamus (Psal. XXVIII), fratres charissimi, quia dum oblationis Dominicae celeberrimam exspectamus solemnitatem, in praesenti etiam B. Severi egregii sacerdotis venerabilem colimus assumptionem. Delectet corda festivitatem celebrare praesentem, exspectare etiam alacriter libeat imminentem. Illa nos festivitas Redemptori nostro referre gratias doceat; ista vero ad amorem nos patriae coelestis accendat.

In truth, we do not then have diverse weights in the bag, if within the secret of our conscience, judging not otherwise of ourselves than of others, we apply the same measures of legal precepts. Namely, so that we do not strive to indicate to others the rule of strict severity, but to treat ourselves with the law of more remiss indulgence. Concerning which fraud Solomon also says: "A double weight and a deceitful balance is an abomination to the Lord (Prov. XX)." It is necessary, therefore, to measure the fruits of the word by no means with diverse, but with the same weights, so that what we command others to do, we ourselves also effectively fulfill with living works. Which certainly the blessed martyr Anastasius laudably did, because while he exhorted others to battle, he himself first seized arms, and immersed himself in the very battle line of the crowded legion, protected by the breastplate of faith; and while he offers an example of engaging to others, he obtains the triumph from the conquered enemy; and, as I might speak thus, while he levels the way to battle for those following, he himself, the victory having soon been completed, is led to the crown.

Him therefore, most beloved, let us follow, namely the most brave warrior of the heavenly host, so that we may strive always to tame the tyrannies of vices, so that we may endeavor to restrain the rebellious pleasures of carnal allurements, so that the noble soul, always intent on the highest things, may fervently seek heavenly things, and despise earthly ones, so that it may not fear to suffer adversity for the truth, so that it may long from its innermost heart to deserve the grace of its Creator alone. For hence the man of the Lord, blessed Anastasius, to touch upon a few things out of many, endured horrific prisons, tolerated the lack of hunger, thirst, cold, and all necessities, despised beatings, and finally, after immense torments of punishments and tortures, lay dead, killed in a river, and lost the life of the flesh in the same element in which, namely, he had previously received the sacraments of eternal life. Well, therefore, a magus, because in the magi the Redeemer of the world, coming, dedicated the firstfruits of his faith.

Let us offer glory and honor to our God, according to the Psalmist, with joyful minds (Psalm XXVIII), most beloved brothers, because while we await the most celebrated solemnity of the Lord's offering, in the present we also cultivate the venerable assumption of the excellent priest, Blessed Severus. Let it delight our hearts to celebrate the present festival; let it also be pleasing to await eagerly the imminent one. Let that festival teach us to give thanks to our Redeemer; but let this one kindle in us the love of the heavenly homeland.

In illa discamus quanta Deus pro homine pertulit; in ista perpendamus, homo per Deum ad quantum celsitudinis culmen ascendit. In illa quippe festivitate unigenitus Dei Filius in templo est humiliter praesentatus; in ista beatissimus ejus famulus ad coeli palatium est cum gloria sublimatus. In illa Redemptorem nostrum parentes ejus in Hierusalem, ut sisterent eum Domino, detulerunt (Luc. II); in ista beatissimi confessoris animam, ut eam divinae majestatis vultui praesentarent, ad coelestem Hierusalem sancti angeli portaverunt. In illa solemnitate Mediator Dei et hominum, abjecto jam carnis praeputio, parvulus est oblatus in templum; in ista confessor egregius deposito terreni corporis pondere liber ascendit in coelum. In illa is qui legi nihil debebat legis tributa persolvit; in ista morti obnoxius jura mortis evasit. Ille de matre nascendo dignatus est esse mortalis; iste carne moriendo fieri meruit immortalis. Veniendo Deus in mundum servilem induit speciem; recedendo Severus de mundo ad angelicam provectus est dignitatem. Sed nisi ille descendisset, iste nullatenus ascendisset. Nisi Deus humanam susciperet formam, nunquam homo ad coelestem pertingeret gloriam. Nisi Deus humiliaretur infra se, nequaquam homo exaltaretur super se. Et quid amplius dicam? Nisi paulo minus ab angelis minoratus esset Deus homo (Psal. VIII), nunquam aequalis angelis fieret purus homo. Quam aequalitatem per semetipsam in Evangelio promittit Veritas, dicens: «In resurrectione autem neque nubent neque nubentur, sed erunt sicut angeli Dei in coelo (Matth. XII).» Ad hujus felicissimae dignitatis culmen, o homo, si te desideras provehi, totis nisibus satage verae humilitatis dejectione prosterni; si exaltari cupis in Christo, dejicere prius in temetipso, deprime superbiam carnis, et ad altitudinem te subleva Creatoris, cohibe quidquid tumidum surgit in te, et mox erigeris valde eminus ultra te. Et certe altus est Deus, imo altissimus. Sed si te in tantum tetenderis ut etiam rumpas, hoc tamen pacto ad ejus celsitudinem non aspiras; imo quo te propius accendere aestimas, eo ad inferiora propulsatus elongas: Audi quid Psalmista dicat: «Excelsus Dominus humilia respicit, et alta a longe cognoscit (Psal. CXXXVII).» Attende etiam qualiter huic sententiae Veritas ipsa concordat: «Omnis, inquit, qui se exaltat, humiliabitur; et qui se humiliat, exaltabitur (Luc. XVIII).»

In that one let us learn how much God suffered for man; in this one let us weigh to how great a peak of loftiness man ascended through God. For in that festival the only-begotten Son of God was humbly presented in the temple; in this one his most blessed servant was sublimated with glory to the palace of heaven. In that one his parents brought our Redeemer to Jerusalem, that they might present him to the Lord (Luke II); in this one holy angels carried the soul of the most blessed confessor to the heavenly Jerusalem, that they might present it to the face of the divine majesty. In that solemnity the Mediator of God and men, the foreskin of the flesh having already been cast off, was offered as a little child in the temple; in this one the excellent confessor, having laid down the weight of the earthly body, ascended free into heaven. In that one he who owed nothing to the law paid the tributes of the law; in this one he who was subject to death escaped the laws of death. He, by being born from a mother, deigned to be mortal; this one, by dying in the flesh, deserved to become immortal. By coming into the world, God put on the form of a servant; by receding from the world, Severus was advanced to angelic dignity. But unless he had descended, this one would by no means have ascended. Unless God took on human form, never would man reach heavenly glory. Unless God were humbled below himself, by no means would man be exalted above himself. And what more shall I say? Unless God-man had been made a little lower than the angels (Psalm VIII), never would pure man be made equal to the angels. Which equality Truth itself promises in the Gospel, saying: "But in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married, but shall be as the angels of God in heaven (Matth. XII)." To the peak of this most happy dignity, O man, if you desire to be advanced, strive with all your efforts to be prostrated in the dejection of true humility; if you desire to be exalted in Christ, first cast yourself down in yourself, depress the pride of the flesh, and lift yourself up to the height of the Creator, restrain whatever rises tumidly in you, and soon you will be raised up very far beyond yourself. And certainly God is high, indeed most high. But if you stretch yourself so much that you even break, yet by this means you do not aspire to his loftiness; indeed, the closer you think you approach, the further you are distanced, being repelled to lower things. Hear what the Psalmist says: "The Lord is high and regards the humble, and knows high things from afar (Psalm CXXXVII)." Attend also how Truth itself agrees with this sentence: "Everyone," it says, "who exalts himself shall be humbled; and he who humbles himself shall be exalted (Luke XVIII)."

Hinc est, quod beatus iste et egregius pontifex, cujus hodie gloriosa solemnia frequentare gaudemus, et in hac vita sedem meruit episcopalem suscipere, et post felicem obitum regni coelestis atria penetrare. Sed, ut virtus humilitatis ejus clarius innotescat, aliquid ex ipsa gestorum illius historia nobis praelibare non pigeat. Legitur enim quia quadam die, dum lanisterii esset occupatus officio, ait ad conjugem: Vadam, et videbo visionem mirabilem, videlicet quomodo columba de coelo veniat, et super electi caput solito more consideat. Conjux vero ejus coepit eum subsannare et increpare, dicens: Sed hic labora, noli otiosus stare. Sive enim ieris, sive non ieris, te pontificem populus non ordinabit. Et ille: Sine me, inquit, ut vadam. Tunc illa mentiri se putans, sed ignoranter vera denuntians, ait: Vade, quia qua hora ieris, statim pontifex ordinaberis. Et paulo post subditur: quia pro deformitate squalidi vestimenti, quo erat indutus, abscondit se post januam ipsius loci, ubi erant omnes orantes; et expleta oratione, statim venit columba et requievit super caput ejus post januam latitantis.

Audistis, fratres charissimi, vitam hominis rebus inopem, virtutum divitiis locupletem. Audistis hominem apud homines in humili loco positum, apud Deum vero in arduae sublimitatis arce subnixum. Audistis virum pannosis quidem vestibus foedum, sed praeclara morum honestate conspicuum. Ubi sunt illi qui dicunt: Nos Dei praecepta servare non possumus, quia terrenam substantiam ad usus necessarios non habemus? Ubi sunt, inquam, qui dum hominibus se excusare nituntur, Deo se multo deterius inexcusabiles reddunt? Accedant et ex B. Severi magisterio veris abundare divitiis discant, ne, dum rebus sunt vacui, sint vitiis pleni et paupertatis caminus si non vitiorum rubiginem purgat, vitiosum metallum ad inanis scoriae fuliginem vertat. Ecce enim beatissimus iste vir sub paupertatis suae onere positus et divinae legis praecepta sufficienter implevit; et, quia aliud non habebat, semetipsum in ara sanctae simplicitatis, velut magnam aliquam columbam, opulentissimum Deo sacrificium obtulit; et, quia in moribus columba fuit, columbae munus accipere meruit. Egestatis quippe angustatus inopia, non ad obsequendum cujuslibet domum potentis intravit, non adulari divitibus, ut mos est pauperum, studuit, non ambitiosa negotiatione augere pecunias anhelavit, non periculosae militiae quae sine peccato bajulari non potest stipendium concupivit, sed muliebri contentus officio, simplicem victum manu et arte quaerebat, et, secundum Psalmistae vocem, labores manuum suarum innocens manducabat (Psal. CXXVII).

Hence it is that this blessed and excellent pontiff, whose glorious solemnities we rejoice to frequent today, deserved both to receive the episcopal seat in this life and to penetrate the courts of the heavenly kingdom after his happy death. But, so that the virtue of his humility may become more clearly known, let it not irk us to taste something from the history of his deeds itself. For it is read that on a certain day, while he was occupied with the office of wool-working, he said to his wife: I will go, and I will see a wonderful vision, namely how a dove comes from heaven, and settles upon the head of the chosen one in the usual manner. But his wife began to mock and rebuke him, saying: But work here, do not stand idle. For whether you go, or do not go, the people will not ordain you pontiff. And he said: Let me go. Then she, thinking she was lying, but ignorantly announcing true things, said: Go, because at whatever hour you go, you will immediately be ordained pontiff. And a little after it is added: that because of the deformity of the squalid garment with which he was clothed, he hid himself behind the door of that same place where all were praying; and the prayer having been completed, immediately a dove came and rested upon the head of him lurking behind the door.

You have heard, most beloved brothers, of a man's life poor in things, but wealthy in the riches of virtues. You have heard of a man placed in a humble position among men, but truly supported in the citadel of arduous loftiness before God. You have heard of a man foul indeed with tattered clothes, but conspicuous with the illustrious honesty of his character. Where are those who say: "We cannot keep the precepts of God because we do not have earthly substance for necessary uses"? Where are they, I say, who while they strive to excuse themselves to men, render themselves much more inexcusably worse to God? Let them approach and learn from the teaching of Blessed Severus how to abound in true riches, lest, while they are empty of things, they be full of vices, and the furnace of poverty, if it does not purge the rust of vices, turns the vicious metal into the soot of empty dross. For behold, this most blessed man, placed under the burden of his poverty, both sufficiently fulfilled the precepts of the divine law; and, because he had nothing else, he offered himself upon the altar of holy simplicity as a most wealthy sacrifice to God, like some great dove; and, because he was a dove in character, he deserved to receive the gift of a dove. Indeed, narrowed by the lack of poverty, he did not enter the house of any powerful person to serve; he did not strive to flatter the rich, as is the custom of the poor; he did not pant to increase his money through ambitious negotiation; he did not desire the stipend of dangerous military service which cannot be carried out without sin; but content with a woman's office, he sought a simple living with his hand and art, and, according to the voice of the Psalmist, being innocent he ate the labors of his hands (Psalm CXXVII).

Qui idcirco hujusmodi artem elegisse prae caeteris non immerito creditur, ut inter uxorem et virum major mutuae charitatis occasio praeberetur, ne, si esset inter eos inaequalitas officiorum, subriperet (subreperet) aliquando etiam diversitas animorum, et ex artis exercendae distantia oriretur forsitan in domestica pace scissura, sed dum uni operi utriusque exhiberetur industria, vere esset in utroque, sicut de primitiva Ecclesia legitur: «Cor unum, et anima una (Act. IV).» Hinc est etiam, quod dum illa beatissimum virum objurgaret, irrideret, verbis mordacibus increparet, ille mitis ac placidus non in iram prorupit, non contumeliosa verba respondit, non ad ulciscendum se in uxorem jus debitae potestatis exercuit. Servans illud Apostoli: «Viri, diligite uxores vestras, et nolite amari esse ad illas (Col. III);» et quia idem dicit Apostolus: «Vir non habet potestatem corporis sui, sed mulier (I Cor. VII);» donec ab ea licentiam suae petitionis extorsit, ire ex propria voluntate ad miraculum non praesumpsit.

Pensate, fratres mei, quando iste in quemlibet virum esse contumax potuit, qui et subjectae mulieri tam humiliter obedivit? quando adversantibus inimicis malum pro malo reddidit, qui et suae uxoris injurias tam aequanimiter toleravit? Aut quando vir iste contumelias proximo praesumpsit inferre, qui et illatam sibi, cum utique potuisset, noluit vindicare? «Beatus siquidem vir, qui potuit transgredi, et non est transgressus, facere mala, et non fecit; ideo stabilita sunt bona illius in Domino (Eccli. XXXI).»

Sed quid est hoc, fratres mei, quod omnipotens Deus electos suos, quos tam charos sibi in aeternum conspicit, tam vehementer quasi despiciens affligit? Et undique in hoc saeculo adversitatum verberibus cingit, quos ante saecula ad ineffabile gaudium supernae felicitatis elegit? Nisi hoc quod pietati fidelium patet, quoniam idcirco sic eos premit in infimis, quia videt quomodo remuneret in summis? Et foris usque ad despecta dejicit, quia intus usque ad incomprehensibilia perducit. Hinc ergo, hinc unusquisque colligat quid illi sunt passuri quos reprobat, si hic tanta severitate cruciat quos amat. Ecce enim beatus Severus rebus necessariis destituitur, deformis indumenti squalore foedatur, vilis lanisterii labore conficitur, et quod omnibus est intolerabilius, subsannantis uxoris derisionibus perurgetur.

Who for that reason is believed not undeservedly to have chosen this kind of art above the rest, so that a greater occasion of mutual charity might be offered between wife and husband, lest, if there were inequality of offices between them, some diversity of minds might also creep in at some time, and from the distance of the art to be exercised there might perhaps arise a rupture in domestic peace; but while the industry of both was applied to one work, there would truly be in both, as is read concerning the primitive Church: "One heart, and one soul (Acts IV)." Hence it is also, that while she rebuked the most blessed man, mocked him, and scolded him with biting words, he, mild and placid, did not break out into anger, did not answer with contumelious words, did not exercise the right of due power to avenge himself upon his wife. Keeping that of the Apostle: "Husbands, love your wives, and do not be bitter toward them (Col. III);" and because the same Apostle says: "The husband has not power of his own body, but the wife (I Cor. VII);" until he extorted from her the license of his petition, he did not presume to go to the miracle of his own will.

Think, my brothers, when could this man be contumacious toward any man, who also obeyed a subject woman so humbly? When did he return evil for evil to opposing enemies, who also tolerated the injuries of his own wife so equanimitously? Or when did this man presume to bring insults upon his neighbor, who also would not vindicate one brought upon himself, although he certainly could have? "Blessed indeed is the man who could have transgressed, and did not transgress, to do evil things, and did not do them; therefore his goods are established in the Lord (Eccli. XXXI)."

But what is this, my brothers, that almighty God afflicts his elect, whom he beholds as so dear to himself for eternity, so vehemently as if despising them? And on all sides in this world he girds with the lashes of adversities those whom before the ages he chose for the ineffable joy of supernal happiness? Unless it be this which is open to the piety of the faithful, that for this reason he thus presses them in the lowest things, because he sees how he may remunerate them in the highest? And he casts them down outwardly even to despised things, because he leads them inwardly even to incomprehensible things. Hence therefore, hence let each one gather what those whom he reproves are going to suffer, if here he tortures with such severity those whom he loves. For behold, blessed Severus is destitute of necessary things, is fouled by the squalor of a deformed garment, is worn out by the labor of vile wool-working, and what is more intolerable to all, is urged on by the derisions of a mocking wife.

Antiquus enim hostis, quem non de paupertatis inopia, non de assidui laboris afflictione, non de inhonestarum vestium deformitate provocare ad impatientiam potuit, ad irrogandam verborum contumeliam mentem uxoris accendit, et ejus linguam ad injuriam mordacis objurgationis exacuit; cor mulieris consuetis suae suggestionis aculeis incitat, et linguam ejus in audaciam male liberae praesumptionis effrenat, quatenus virilis animus, qui ad impatientiam ex mundi adversitate non flectitur, saltem ex uxoris injuria ad iracundiam provocetur, et munitissimum Christi vallum, quod circumfusa hostium multitudo non penetrat, exorta intrinsecus seditio civilis aperiat; quod obsidentis exercitus impacti arietes diruere nequeunt, domestica scissura praebente aditum capiatur. In alto quippe vir sanctus mentis aedificium fixerat, et idcirco illuc irrumpere hostiles impetus non valebant. Quaeritur ergo ab adversario, quia haec excelsa munitio inexpugnabilis cernitur, quibus ad eam gradibus ascendatur. Vicina est autem vero mulier atque subjuncta. Cor igitur mulieris tenuit, et quasi scalam, qua ad cor viri ascendere potuisset, invenit. Occupavit animum conjugis scala mariti; sed nihil hac arte praevaluit, quia vir fortis patientiae scutum verborum telis opposuit, et ea pro nihilo deputans, velut audiens non audivit Dignum nempe erat ut mulieris verba virilis animus non admitteret, cum profecto de ipso primo lapsu humani generis nosset quod docere mulier recta nesciret. Unde bene etiam per Paulum dicitur: «Docere autem mulierem non permitto (I Tim. I).» Quia nimirum aliquando cum docuit, a sapientiae tramitae deviavit. Antiquus itaque hostis ab Adam in officina lanisterii perdidit qui Adam in paradiso superavit (Gen. I); atque adjutricem suam mulierem, dum ad contumeliam amarae correptionis ascendit, ad exemplum potius discendae patientiae nesciens destinavit; et dum illam perversa quae doceret edocuit, ad scholam rectitudinis misit; et quae excitata fuerat ut perderet, erudita est ne periret. Sic, sic a nostris viris fortibus hostis percutitur, ut sua ei tela rapiantur. Unde se exaggerare aestimat dolorem vulnerum, inde eis contra semetipsum suggerit arma virtutum.

Ex verbis autem male corripientis uxoris, dilectissimi fratres, solerter debemus inspicere quod antiquus adversarius non solum per semetipsum, sed per eos etiam qui nobis adhaerent, statum satagit nostrae mentis inclinare. Cum enim cor nostrum lubricus serpens sua persuasione non subruit, ad hoc nimirum per linguas adhaerentium repit. Hinc enim scriptum est: «A filiis tuis cave, et a domesticis tuis attende (Eccli. XXXII)» Hinc per prophetam dicitur: «Unusquisque se a proximo suo custodiat, et in omni fratre suo non habeat fudiciam (Jer. IX).»

For the ancient enemy, whom he could not provoke to impatience from the lack of poverty, nor from the affliction of assiduous labor, nor from the deformity of dishonest clothes, kindled the mind of the wife to inflict the insult of words, and sharpened her tongue to the injury of biting rebuke; he incites the woman's heart with the usual stings of his suggestion, and unbridles her tongue to the audacity of a poorly free presumption, so that the manly soul, which is not bent to impatience from the world's adversity, might at least be provoked to anger from the wife's injury, and a domestic civil sedition arising within might open the most fortified rampart of Christ, which the surrounding multitude of enemies does not penetrate; that what the impacted rams of the besieging army cannot destroy, might be captured by the domestic rupture offering an entrance. Indeed, the holy man had fixed the building of his mind on high, and therefore hostile impulses were not able to break in there. It is sought therefore by the adversary, because this lofty fortification is seen to be impregnable, by what steps it may be ascended. But a woman is truly near and joined. He held therefore the heart of the woman, and found as it were a ladder by which he could have ascended to the heart of the man. The ladder of the husband occupied the mind of the spouse; but he prevailed nothing by this art, because the brave man opposed the shield of patience to the darts of words, and reputing them as nothing, as one hearing he did not hear. It was certainly worthy that the manly soul should not admit the woman's words, since indeed from that first lapse of the human race itself he knew that a woman knew not how to teach right things. Whence it is also well said through Paul: "But I do not permit a woman to teach (I Tim. I)." Because namely at some time when she taught, she deviated from the path of wisdom. And so the ancient enemy lost from Adam in the workshop of wool-working him who overcame Adam in paradise (Gen. I); and he unknowingly destined his helper woman, while she ascended to the insult of bitter correction, rather for an example of patience to be learned; and while he taught her perverse things which she should teach, he sent her to the school of rectitude; and she who had been excited so that she might destroy, was erudite lest she perish. Thus, thus is the enemy struck by our brave men, so that his own darts are snatched from him. Whence he thinks to exaggerate the pain of wounds, thence he suggests to them against himself the arms of virtues.

From the words of a poorly rebuking wife, most beloved brothers, we ought skillfully to inspect that the ancient adversary strives to incline the state of our mind not only through himself, but also through those who adhere to us. For when the slippery serpent does not subvert our heart by his persuasion, he truly creeps to this through the tongues of those adhering. For hence it is written: "Beware of your sons, and attend to your domestics (Eccli. XXXII)." Hence it is said through the prophet: "Let each one guard himself from his neighbor, and let him not have confidence in any brother of his (Jer. IX)."

Hinc rursum scriptum est: «Inimici hominis domestici ejus (Mich. VII; Matth. X).» Improbus namque adversarius eum a bonorum cordibus repelli se conspicit, eos, qui ab illis familiarius diliguntur, exquirit, et eos saepe ad inferendam injuriam concitat, quatenus sancti viridum eorum, a quibus maxime venerari debuerant, perversitate lacerantur, eorum mens proclivius ad iracundiam provocetur. Sed ecce iniquus hostis ubique frangitur, ubique superatur: Bellatoribus enim Christi per cuncta jam tentationum argumenta succubuit, qui illud suum familiare solatium etiam de muliere frustratus amisit. Sic enim et beatus Job postquam cuncta quae possederat abstulisset, post quam ipsum ejus corpus gravi ulcere vulnerasset, quia vulneribus carnis ad mentis vulnus pervenire non valuit, etiam conjunctae mulieris linguam quaesivit, et quia aperto certamine superari se doluit, de ore conjugis jaculum quasi de insidiis intorsit. Dixit enim illa: «Adhuc permanes in simplicitate tua? Benedic Deo, et morere (Job II).» Sic et beatus Tobias postquam ad nimiae paupertatis aerumnam, Deo disponente, devenit, postquam oculorum lumen amisit, quia illum malignus spiritus vidit corporeo lumine non videntem, divino autem splendore interius coruscantem, foris rebus vacuum, intrinsecus Deo plenum, ad solita arma cucurrit et uxoris lingnam ad inferendum vehementissimae objurgationis opprobrium concitavit. Quae dixit: «Vere vana facta est spes tua, eleemosynae tuae modo apparuerunt (Tob. II).» Et sicut istae perversae conjugi nihil respondit, sed injecto sibi diabolicae suggestionis telo, mox ad orationis arma, Scriptura teste, cucurrit (Tob. IV), sic et beatissimus vir Severus respondere ad uxoris verba contempsit; ad accipiendum vero S. Spiritus donum, eodem suggerente spiritu, nesciens properavit.

Si autem divinae justitiae ordinem subtili meditatione perpendimus, non sine causa sanctos viros uxorum afflictos molestia reperimus. Quia enim vir uxori male consentiendo Creatoris sui praecepta contempserat, jam dignum est ut a viro mulier dissentiendo duris eum verberum contumeliis vehementer affligat. Quo enim mulieri male obediens paruit, eo Conditori suo inobediens fuit. Scriptum quippe est: «Tulit mulier de fructu et comedit, deditque viro suo qui comedit: et aperti sunt oculi amborum (Genes. III).» Ex ea igitur ab Auctore feriendus erat, quam errans Auctori praeposuerat, ut unde homo culpam non timuit superbus admittere, inde poenam corrigendus inveniret. Et tanto citius respiceret ad illum quem superbiendo contempsit, quanto amaritudinis plenam esse conspiceret cui delectabiliter obedivit.

Hence again it is written: "A man's enemies are those of his own household (Mich. VII; Matth. X)." For the wicked adversary beholds himself repelled from the hearts of the good, he seeks those who are more familiarly loved by them, and he often incites them to inflict injury, so that while the holy are lacerated by the perversity of those by whom they ought most greatly to have been venerated, their mind may be more prone to be provoked to anger. But behold, the iniquitous enemy is broken everywhere, is overcome everywhere: for he succumbed to the warriors of Christ through all the arguments of temptations already, who also lost that familiar solace of his, being frustrated even concerning the woman. For so also blessed Job, after he had taken away all that he possessed, after he had wounded his very body with a grave ulcer, because he was not able to reach the wound of the mind by the wounds of the flesh, he sought also the tongue of the joined woman, and because he grieved that he was overcome in open contest, he twisted a dart from the mouth of the spouse as if from ambushes. For she said: "Do you still persevere in your simplicity? Bless God, and die (Job II)." Thus also blessed Tobit, after he came to the hardship of excessive poverty, God disposing, after he lost the light of his eyes, because the malignant spirit saw him not seeing with corporeal light, but innerly flashing with divine splendor, empty of things outwardly, full of God inwardly, he ran to the usual arms and incited the tongue of the wife to inflict the reproach of most vehement rebuke. Who said: "Truly your hope is made vain, your alms have appeared now (Tob. II)." And as this one answered nothing to the perverse spouse, but the dart of diabolical suggestion having been cast at him, he soon ran to the arms of prayer, Scripture witnessing (Tob. IV), so also the most blessed man Severus contemned to answer the words of his wife; but he unknowingly hastened to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, the same spirit suggesting.

But if we weigh the order of divine justice with subtle meditation, we find not without cause holy men afflicted by the molestation of their wives. For because the man by poorly consenting to the wife had contemned the precepts of his Creator, it is already worthy that the woman by dissenting from the man should vehemently afflict him with the hard insults of lashes. For in that he obeyed the woman poorly, he was inobedient to his Founder. For it is written: "The woman took of the fruit and ate, and gave to her husband who ate: and the eyes of both were opened (Genes. III)." From her therefore he was to be struck by the Author, whom erring he had preferred to the Author, so that whence man did not fear to admit fault proudly, thence he might find punishment to be corrected. And so much more quickly would he look back to him whom by being proud he contemned, by as much as he would behold her whom he delightfully obeyed to be full of bitterness.

Verumtamen non idcirco ista dicimus, ut beati viri uxorem periisse cum reprobis mulieribus asseramus. Si enim ab electorum sorte exclusam esse cognosceret, nequaquam vir sancto repletus Spiritu unum cum ea sepulcrum habere voluisset. Communis igitur sepultura corporum indicat quod beatorum conjugum animas meritorum varietas non discernat; et dum vir uxori in morte se libenter associat, constat utique quia in illa vita utriusque inter se merita non elongat. Credi quippe non immerito potest, quia postquam mulier beatissimum virum divinitus electum ad pontificale fastigium contra suam opinionem vidit, mox maculam sui reatus agnovit, confusa erubuit, poenitentiam egit, et sic de caetero studiosius se in virtutibus sanctae conversationis exercuit. Unde etiam de illa scriptum est quia postquam beatissimus vir episcopus factus est, admirans congratulabatur ei.

Vos autem, dilectissimi fratres mei, qui ad audienda tanti viri praeconia, Deo vos inspirante, diligenter intenditis, patientiam laudatis, humilitatem exollitis, tantarum virtutum insignia in usus vestros assumite, et quod illum fuisse libenter auditis, ipsi etiam fieri per Dei gratiam studiose curate. Eritis namque quod est, si contenditis et ipsi esse quod fuit. In hujus igitur peregrinationis itinere nulla vos prosperitatis suadela decipiat, nulla irruens adversitas frangat, non mentem vestram paupertatis inopia deprimat, non spes abundantiae temporalis extollat, non illata ex ore proximi contumelia ad iracundiam provocet, non ad ulciscendum vos libertas permissae in quemlibet potestatis instiget, quatenus qui nunc imitanda B. Severi vestigia tenetis in vita, cum illo postmodum de aeternae felicitatis praemio gaudere valeatis in patria, auxiliante Domino nostro Jesu Christo, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et gloriatur [regnat] per infinita saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo V.

II. DE SANCTO SEVERO EPISCOPO RAVENNATE ET CONFESSORE. (I FEBR).

Audistis, fratres charissimi, ex B. Severi, dum legeretur, historia, qualiter illum Deus de lanificii ergodochio sustulit, quam mirabiliter illum non solum praeter opinionem omnium civium, sed etiam sui, ad arcem pontificatus elegit. Audistis pauperculum hominem a Deo mundi divitibus auferri. Audistis dejectum [abjectum] et humilem supra potentatus nobilium cum gloria sublimari. Audistis Spiritum sanctum sapientes saeculi contemnentem, simplicem hominem eligentem, ornatos vestibus transvolantem, in pannosum et squalidum, quasi in amicum familiarem et olim sibi notissimum descendentem.

Nevertheless, we do not say these things in order to assert that the wife of the blessed man perished with reprobate women. For if he had known her to be excluded from the lot of the elect, by no means would the man filled with the Holy Spirit have wished to have one tomb with her. Therefore, the common burial of their bodies indicates that the variety of merits does not separate the souls of the blessed spouses; and while the man willingly associates himself with his wife in death, it is certainly established that in that life the merits of both do not distance them from each other. For it can be believed not without merit that after the woman saw the most blessed man, divinely elected to the pontifical height (*pontificale fastigium*) contrary to her opinion, she soon recognized the stain of her guilt, blushed in confusion, did penance, and thus for the rest exercised herself more studiously in the virtues of holy conversation. Hence it is also written of her that after the most blessed man was made bishop, wondering, she congratulated him.

But you, my most beloved brothers, who diligently attend to hearing the praises of such a great man, God inspiring you, you praise patience, you extol humility; take up the marks of such great virtues for your own use, and what you willingly hear that he was, studiously care to become yourselves through the grace of God. For you will be what he is, if you yourselves strive to be what he was. Therefore, in the journey of this pilgrimage, let no persuasion of prosperity deceive you, let no rushing adversity break you, let not the want of poverty depress your mind, let not the hope of temporal abundance extol you, let not an insult brought from the mouth of a neighbor provoke you to anger, let not the freedom of permitted power over anyone instigate you to avenge yourselves, so that you who now hold the footsteps of Blessed Severus to be imitated in life, may afterwards be able to rejoice with him concerning the prize of eternal happiness in the homeland, by the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and is glorified [reigns] with the Father and the Holy Spirit through infinite ages of ages. Amen.

Sermon V.

II. CONCERNING SAINT SEVERUS, BISHOP OF RAVENNA AND CONFESSOR. (FEB 1).

You have heard, most beloved brothers, from the history of Blessed Severus while it was being read, how God raised him from the wool workshop (*lanificii ergodochio*), how wonderfully He elected him, not only beyond the opinion of all the citizens but even his own, to the citadel of the pontificate. You have heard that a poor little man was taken by God from the rich of the world. You have heard that the dejected and humble was sublimated with glory above the powers of the noble. You have heard that the Holy Spirit, contemning the wise of the age, electing a simple man, flying over those adorned with garments, descended upon one ragged and squalid, as if upon a familiar friend and one formerly most known to Him.

Libet autem, dilectissimi, ad illud pulchrum spectaculum totos interiorum luminum radios diligenter expandere, et omnipotens Deus quam diverso modo ab hominibus judicet, in quantum mihi possibile est, studiose pensare. Conveniunt universi cives ad oratorium, descendit Spiritus sanctus in columbae specie super populum congregatum. Multa inferius corda, unus desuper inspector. Praestolantur isti magnum aliquem ex divitibus eligi; considerat ille quis ex omnibus maxime valeat dives virtutibus inveniri. Isti apud se praeferunt eruditam linguam, luculentum sermonem; ille autem animum simplicem et cordis eligit puritatem. Hinc populus visu plebeios praeterit, ad primates vero, quis eorum maxime eligatur, attendit; inde autem «excelsus Dominus humilia respicit, et alta a longe cognoscit (Psal. CXXXVII).» Hinc multi sibimetipsis, illud sacrae dignitatis culmen exoptant, et garrulo silentio intra conscientiam clamant: O si columba veniat super me, o si Deus eligat me! Putas ego ero electus? Putas mihi dabitur episcopatus? Inde autem ille scrutatur renes et corda (I Par. XXVIII; Psal. VII), «qui finxit sigillatim corda eorum, qui intelligit omnia opera eorum (Psal. XXXII).»

Et quidem aderant ibi multi, utpote in egregia civitate, alii quidem frementium equorum glomeratis gressibus incedere soliti, alii claris natalium titulis insigniti, alii pretiosarum vestium nitore conspicui, alii crebris obsequentium militum cuneis constipati, alii omnibus his mundi muneribus multipliciter praediti, alii quibusdam pro sua possibilitate dotati. Sed omnipotens Deus, qui corda omnium subtiliter intendebat, quod olim per prophetam dixerat, sine aliquo vocis strepitu iterum repetebat: «Super quem, inquit, requiescet Spiritus meus, nisi super humilem, et quietum, et trementem sermones meos?» (Isa. LXVI.) Videbat populus in aperto loco columbam coelitus exspectantem. Aspiciebat illa Severum pauperculum post januam latitantem. Qui enim se hominibus abscondebat, divinae majestatis intuitum declinare non poterat.

Quid est hoc, S. Severe? tam pauper, tam dives? tam humilis, tam sublimis? tam pannosus, tam gloriosus? apud judicia humana dejectus, ex divina providentia invisibiliter sublimatus? Cur te abscondere niteris, qui ad hoc proveheris ut ad virtutis exemplum omnium oculis proponaris? Cur vultus hominum crubescis, qui divinae majestatis conspectui prae omnibus placuisti? Videlicet idcirco absconderis, ut videas, et non videaris; videas scilicet columbam pro admiratione; non videaris autem pro vestium foeditate.

It is pleasant, most beloved, to diligently expand all the rays of the inner lights toward that beautiful spectacle, and to studiously weigh, as much as is possible for me, how differently from men Almighty God judges. All the citizens gather at the oratory; the Holy Spirit descends in the likeness of a dove upon the assembled people. Many hearts below, one Inspector above. These men expect someone great from among the rich to be elected; He considers who from among all most greatly prevails in being found rich in virtues. These men prefer in their own minds an erudite tongue, a brilliant sermon; He, however, elects a simple mind and purity of heart. Hence the people pass over the commoners in their sight, and attend to the primates, as to who of them might most greatly be elected; but from the other side "the Lord on high regards the humble, and knows the lofty from afar (Psal. CXXXVII)." Hence many long for themselves for that summit of sacred dignity, and cry out with a garrulous silence within their conscience: O if the dove should come upon me, o if God should elect me! Do you think I will be the elected one? Do you think the bishopric will be given to me? But from there He searches the reins and the hearts (I Par. XXVIII; Psal. VII), "who fashioned the hearts of them individually, who understands all their works (Psal. XXXII)."

And indeed many were present there, as in an eminent city, some indeed accustomed to proceed with the crowded steps of neighing horses, others distinguished by clear titles of birth, others conspicuous by the brilliance of precious garments, others thronged by frequent wedges of following soldiers, others multifariously endowed with all these gifts of the world, others endowed with certain ones according to their possibility. But Almighty God, who subtly intended the hearts of all, again repeated without any noise of voice what He had formerly said through the prophet: "Upon whom," He said, "shall my Spirit rest, except upon the humble, and quiet, and the one trembling at my words?" (Isa. LXVI.) The people saw the dove from heaven waiting in an open place. She looked toward poor little Severus lurking behind the door. For he who hid himself from men could not decline the gaze of the divine majesty.

What is this, Saint Severus? So poor, so rich? So humble, so sublime? So ragged, so glorious? Dejected according to human judgments, invisibly sublimated by divine providence? Why do you strive to hide yourself, you who are promoted to this that you might be proposed to the eyes of all as an example of virtue? Why do you blush at the faces of men, you who have pleased the sight of the divine majesty before all others? Namely, for this reason you are hidden, that you may see, and not be seen; see, that is, the dove for admiration; not be seen, however, for the foulness of your garments.

Age jam manifesta te in publicum, procede in medium, et Christianae familiae suscipe villicatum. Exeat margarita de sterquilinio, ut in summi regis fulgeat ornamento. Non lateat ulterius lucerna sub modio, sed super candelabrum posita, omnes, qui in domo sunt, splendoris sui luce perfundat (Matth. V). Pasce igitur Dominicum gregem, et super ovile Christi curam exhibe pastoralem. Tibi Christus Ecclesiam suam committere jam decrevit, quam inaestimabili sui sanguinis pretio comparavit. Suscipe egregiae administrationis officium, ut de commissi talenti foenore auctum referas lucrum. Nec expavescas ignorantiam litterarum, non dubites de incompositorum enormitate sermonum, quia ille qui promovet te, sine legendi labore instruet te; qui tibi doctrinae committit officium, docendi etiam suggeret incrementum. Summum quippe est verbum, quod tibi seminandi verbi exhibet ministerium. Hoc verbum tibi, tuisque [f. tuique] similibus per semetipsum dicit: «Cum steteritis ante reges, nolite cogitare quomodo aut quid loquamini; dabitur enim vobis in illa hora quid loquamini (Matth. X).» Et iterum: «Non vos estis, qui loquimini, sed Spiritus Patris vestri, qui loquitur in vobis (Ibid.).»

Quid plura? Tandem venit columba, et mirantibus cunctis dilectum sibi caput invisit. Et certe jam olim in ejus pectore invisibiliter erat, in cujus nunc verticem corporaliter descendebat. Sed quid jam fugitivus Dei faceret? Quo se verteret? Quod sibi latibulum tutius inveniret? A conspectu omnium fugit, valvas opposuit, ad videndum sibi solas postium rimulas dereliquit. Sed qui humanos aspectus avertere potuit, columbini acumen intuitus non evasit. Videt se deprehensum; conqueritur intra se nihil sibi profuisse confugium. Verumtamen adhuc suspicatur deceptam errare columbam, nec posse in tanta hominum multitudine certam eligendi notare personam. Tertio igitur ad se volitantem agitatis manibus repulit, et sic in nomine sanctissimae Trinitatis benedictionem suae consecrationis accepit.

O novum, et inauditum promotionis ordinem! o admirabilem egregii pontificis dignitatem! Nam quid aliud fuit, in caput beatissimi viri columbam tertia vice descendere, nisi patenter illum in Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti nomine consecrare? Et quid aliud fuit eamdem columbam a se exturbando, manibus tangere, nisi ecclesiasticae institutionis ordine, in ipsis manibus oleum sanctae unctionis accipere? Nam quod columba in sanctissimi viri caput illapsa descendit, officium manus impositionis implevit. Quod autem sacris se manibus tangi permisit, ipsas manus sancti Spiritus unctione signavit.

Come now, manifest yourself in public, proceed into the midst, and take up the stewardship of the Christian family. Let the pearl come out of the dunghill, that it may shine in the ornament of the highest King. Let the lamp no longer lie hidden under a bushel, but placed upon a lampstand, let it pour the light of its brilliance upon all who are in the house (Matth. V). Feed therefore the Lord's flock, and exhibit pastoral care over the sheepfold of Christ. Christ has already decreed to commit His Church to you, which He purchased with the inestimable price of His blood. Take up the office of eminent administration, so that you may bring back an increased profit from the interest of the committed talent. Neither should you fear ignorance of letters, nor doubt concerning the enormity of uncomposed sermons, because He who promotes you will instruct you without the labor of reading; He who commits to you the office of doctrine, will also suggest the increase of teaching. For it is the Highest Word which exhibits to you the ministry of sowing the word. This Word says to you, and to those like you, through Himself: "When you stand before kings, do not think how or what you should speak; for it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak (Matth. X)." And again: "It is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you (Ibid.)."

What more? At last the dove came, and while all were wondering, she visited the head beloved to her. And certainly He was already invisibly in his breast, upon whose crown He now corporally descended. But what should the fugitive of God now do? Where should he turn? What safer hiding place should he find for himself? He fled from the sight of all, he set the doors against them, he left for himself only the little cracks of the doorposts for seeing. But he who was able to turn away human gazes did not escape the sharpness of the dovelike intuition. He sees himself caught; he complains within himself that his refuge profited him nothing. Nevertheless, he still suspects that the dove errs, being deceived, and is not able in such a great multitude of men to note a certain person to be elected. Therefore, for the third time, he repelled her flying toward him with agitated hands, and thus in the name of the most holy Trinity he received the blessing of his consecration.

O new and unheard-of order of promotion! O admirable dignity of an eminent pontiff! For what else was it, for the dove to descend upon the head of the most blessed man for the third time, except to patently consecrate him in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit? And what else was it, to touch the same dove by driving her away from himself, except, in the order of ecclesiastical institution, to receive the oil of holy unction in those very hands? For in that the dove descended, having glided onto the head of the most holy man, she fulfilled the office of the imposition of hands. But in that she permitted herself to be touched by his sacred hands, she signed those very hands with the unction of the Holy Spirit.

Jam vero illud quantae gratiae, quantaeque est excellentiae, Spiritum sanctum in illa figura suscipere, in qua constat super ipsum Dominum nostrum, Mediatorem videlicet Dei et hominum, descendisse? (Matth. III.) Et certe quocunque modo Spiritum sanctum quis accipiat, magni admodum meriti est; in illa autem figura, in qua et ipse unigenitus Patris Filius, accipere Spiritum sanctum, summae est sanctitatis indicium. Super ipsos namque apostolos Spiritus sanctus in igneis linguis apparuit (Act. II); super beatum vero Severum non in ignis imagine, non in linguarum diversitate; sed, sicut super baptizatum Dominum, in columbae visus est specie (Matth. III); ut profecto ostenderet quia sicut columba simplex est animal atque ab amaritudine fellis alienum, ita et beatissimus vir omni carebat livoris amaritudine, et in sancta vivebat simplicis animi puritate. Ecce liquido manifestatur quod per apostolorum principem dicitur: «Quia non est personarum acceptor Deus, sed in omni gente, qui timet illum, et operatur justitiam, acceptus est illi (Act. X).»

Illud etiam nunc in electione beatissimi hujus viri per semetipsam divina providentia custodivit quod olim nos observare per B. Jacobum monuit. Ait enim inter caetera: «Fratres mei, nolite in personarum acceptione habere fidem Domini nostri Jesu Christi gloriae (Jac. II).» Deinde subjungit: «Etenim si introierit in conventum vestrum vir aureum annulum habens in veste candida: introierit autem et pauper in sordido habitu, et intendatis in eum, qui indutus est veste praeclara, et dixeritis ei: Tu sede hic bene; pauperi autem dicatis: Tu sta illic, vel sede sub scabello pedum meorum; nonne judicatis apud vosmetipsos, et facti estis judices cogitationum iniquarum?» (Ibid.) Nam si hoc beatus apostolus de quotidiani consessibus loquitur, quis non de acceptione personarum in culpam saepissime labitur, nisi cum apud semetipsum forsitan ita judicat, ut ille, cui honorem exhibet, tanto ei melior, quanto et ditior videatur? Sed haec apostolica sententia tunc rectius intelligitur, si illa sedendi ac standi distantia ad honores ecclesiasticos referatur. Non enim leve crimen esse putandum est quemlibet divitem ad ecclesiastici regiminis culmen evehi; pauperem vero sanctiorem et doctiorem a suscipiendi honoris dignitate repelli. Fecit itaque mirabilis in sanctis suis omnipotens Deus (Psal. LXVII), quod fieri debere per apostolum suum docuit, quando spretis divitibus magnum hunc pauperem squalidis indutum vestibus ad episcopalem cathedram mirabiliter sublimavit. Qui suscepto pontificatus officio non magis ex ordine ecclesiasticae dignitatis ascendit quam in arcem quoque summae sanctitatis excrevit.

Now indeed of how great grace and how great excellence is it, to receive the Holy Spirit in that figure in which it is established that He descended upon our Lord Himself, the Mediator namely of God and men (Matth. III)? And certainly in whatever way one receives the Holy Spirit, it is of very great merit; but to receive the Holy Spirit in that figure in which also the only-begotten Son of the Father received Him, is an indication of the highest holiness. For upon the apostles themselves the Holy Spirit appeared in fiery tongues (Act. II); but upon the blessed Severus He was seen not in the image of fire, not in the diversity of tongues, but, just as upon the baptized Lord, in the likeness of a dove (Matth. III); that He might surely show that just as the dove is a simple animal and alien to the bitterness of gall (*fellis*), so also the most blessed man was lacking in all bitterness of malice, and lived in the holy purity of a simple mind. Behold, it is clearly manifested what is said by the prince of the apostles: "That God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation, he who fears Him and works justice is accepted by Him (Act. X)."

Divine providence itself also now guarded in the election of this most blessed man what He formerly warned us to observe through Blessed James. For he says among other things: "My brothers, do not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory with respect of persons (Jac. II)." Then he subjoins: "For if there shall enter into your assembly a man having a gold ring in a white garment, and there shall also enter a poor man in a filthy habit, and you attend to him who is clothed in the brilliant garment, and shall say to him: You sit here well; but you say to the poor man: You stand there, or sit under the footstool of my feet; do you not judge among yourselves, and are made judges of iniquitous thoughts? (Ibid.)" For if the blessed apostle speaks this concerning daily sittings, who does not very often fall into fault concerning the respect of persons, unless when among himself he perhaps so judges, that he to whom he exhibits honor seems so much better to him, as he is also richer? But this apostolic sentence is then more rightly understood, if that distance of sitting and standing is referred to ecclesiastical honors. For it is not to be thought a light crime for any rich man to be elevated to the summit of ecclesiastical government, while a poorer man, holier and more learned, is repelled from the dignity of receiving honor. Thus Almighty God, wonderful in His saints (Psal. LXVII), did what He taught through His apostle ought to be done, when the rich being spurned, He wonderfully sublimated this great poor man clothed in filthy garments to the episcopal chair. Who, having taken up the office of the pontificate, did not more ascend from the order of ecclesiastical dignity than he also grew into the citadel of the highest holiness.

Nonnulli enim cum regiminis curam suscipiunt, ad lacerandos subditos protinus inardescunt, terrorem potestatis exhibent, et quibus prodesse debuerant, magis nocent, et quia charitatis viscera in filios non habent, domini videri appetunt, patres se esse minime recognoscunt humilitatis locum in elationem dominationis immutant, et semetipsos quasi quidam tyranni in superbiae cornibus exaltant et si quando extrinsecus blandiuntur, intrinsecus saeviunt. De quibus per semetipsam Veritas dicit: «Veniunt ad vos in vestimentis ovium, intrinsecus autem sunt lupi rapaces (Matth. VII).» In vestimentis quippe ovium veniunt, quia vellus quidem innocentiae in superficie praetendunt, sed lupi rapaces sunt, quia malitiae morsus in occulto cordis exacuunt, non attendentes illud quod Dominus discipulis suis dicit: «Ecce, inquit, ego mitto vos sicut agnos inter lupos (Luc. X).» Qui enim locum praedicationis suscipit, mala inferre non debet, sed tolerare, ut ex ipsa sua mansuetudine iram saevientium mitiget, et peccatorum vulnera in aliis ipse afflictionibus vulneratus sanet. Quem et se quando zelus rectitudinis exigit ut erga subjectos saeviat, furor ipse de amore sit, non de crudelitate, quatenus et jura disciplinae exhibeat, et intus paterna pietate diligat quos foris quasi insequendo, [saeviendo] castigat. Mali autem pastores non sicut agni inter lupos, sed potius sicut lupi inter agnos sunt, quia, dum a subditis sibi nullum plerumque morsum laesionis excipiunt, ipsi in eos rapinae suae dentes crudeliter figunt.

Nonnulli vero antequam officii sacerdotalis culmen attingant, mites se et humiles in omnibus exhibent, excrescere in virtutibus student, bonis moribus pollent, et in omni se honestate sanctae conversationis exercent, mala nulli aliquando inferunt, illata vero patienter ferunt, carnem suam assidue jejuniis et orationibus edomant, et cunctos in se vitiorum motus censura rigidae severitatis frenant. Sed cum pastoralis custodiae jura suscipiunt, quidquid sanctitatis habuerant, ut ita, proh dolor! dicam, concambio miserae permutationis amittunt, omne quod pie vixerant obliviscuntur, et decurrentium more fluminum, ad ima absque ullo retentionis obstaculo devolvuntur, et velut mali remiges, cum ad alta pelagi vento impellente deveniunt, quando scilicet majori conamine opus est, in somnum se mortifera securitate resolvunt; vel potius cum gubernandae navis clavum suscipiunt, qui prius cum caeteris strenue navigaverant, jam in magisterio positi in negligentiae se torpore dejiciunt, et non solum alios non custodiunt, sed semetipsos etiam infeliciter perdunt.

For some, when they take up the care of government, immediately burn to lacerate their subjects; they exhibit the terror of power, and they harm more those whom they ought to have profited; and because they do not have the bowels of charity toward their children, they desire to be seen as lords, they by no means recognize themselves to be fathers; they change the place of humility into the elation of domination, and exalt themselves as certain tyrants in the horns of pride; and if ever they are flattering outwardly, they rage inwardly. Concerning whom Truth says through Itself: "They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves (Matth. VII)." For they come in sheep's clothing because they pretend a fleece of innocence on the surface, but they are ravening wolves because they sharpen the bites of malice in the hidden part of the heart, not attending to that which the Lord says to His disciples: "Behold," He says, "I send you as lambs among wolves (Luc. X)." For he who takes up the place of preaching ought not to inflict evils, but to tolerate them, so that by his very mildness he may mitigate the anger of those who rage, and he himself, wounded by afflictions, may heal the wounds of sins in others. And even when the zeal of rectitude requires him to rage toward his subjects, let that very fury be from love, not from cruelty, so that he may both exhibit the laws of discipline and inwardly love with paternal piety those whom he chastises outwardly as if by pursuing [raging]. But bad pastors are not as lambs among wolves, but rather as wolves among lambs, because, while they receive for the most part no bite of injury from their subjects, they themselves cruelly fix the teeth of their rapine in them.

But some, before they attain the summit of the priestly office, exhibit themselves as mild and humble in all things; they study to increase in virtues, they are strong in good morals, and they exercise themselves in all the honesty of holy conversation; never do they inflict evils on anyone, but they bear those inflicted patiently; they assiduously subdue their flesh with fasts and prayers, and they bridle all the motions of vices in themselves with the censure of rigid severity. But when they take up the laws of pastoral custody, whatever of holiness they had held, they lose—as I may so say, oh grief!—by an exchange of miserable permutation; they forget everything in which they had lived piously, and after the manner of running rivers, they are rolled down to the lowest depths without any obstacle of retention; and like bad rowers, when they come to the deep parts of the sea, the wind impelling them, when namely there is need for greater effort, they resolve themselves into sleep with a deadly security; or rather when they take up the tiller of the ship to be governed, they who before had navigated strenuously with the others, now placed in the mastery, cast themselves down into the torpor of negligence, and not only do they not guard others, but they even unhappily lose themselves.

Sed quid ista de reprobis pastoribus loquimur, cum et ipsi summae sanctitatis viri suscepto curae pastoralis officio, et si ad mala, quod absit, nullatenus proruunt, saepe tamen ex ipsa boni perfectione, necessitate cogente aliquantulum minuuntur? Hinc est quod B. papa Greg. in prioris vitae conversatione visibilia quaeque se transcendisse gloriatur, postmodum vero curis exterioribus implicari pia lamentatione conqueritur (GREG. in praef. lib. I Dialog.). Hinc est etiam quod de B. Martino Turonensi episcopo legitur, quia major ei virtus ante episcopatum fuerat quam post episcopatum (SEVER. SULPIT., Vita S. Martini, lib. II. cap. 5). Quanquam procul dubio credendum sit quia sanctis praedicatoribus quidquid pro aliorum custodia de propria perfectione subtrahitur, multo largius, multoque uberius in acquirendis subditorum lucris augetur.

Perpendite ergo, fratres charissimi, quam mirabilis vir fuerit beatus Severus, cui sanctitatis meritum suscepti cura regiminis addidit quod aliis excellentissimis etiam viris minuere consuevit. Nam quod aliis saepe descensionis est causa, hoc illi provectionis probatur exstitisse materia; et inde sibi perfectionis culmen est auctum, unde et perfectissimis viris plerumque non ambigitur imminutum. Ecce enim ante commissae praelationis officium virtutum quidem vitam duxisse cognoscitur, virtutum tamen signa nequaquam fecisse perhibetur, post ordinationem vero facta per illum miraculorum signa apertis vocibus clamant quantum priorem vitam merita posteriora transcendant.

Nam quam praeclarum, dilectissimi fratres mei, quam stupendum fuit illud insigne miraculum, quo videlicet inter ipsa missarum solemnia subito in extasim raptus, per spiritum Mutinense oppidum petiit, defuncti fratris et coepiscopi Deo animam commendavit, corpus in sepulcro posuit, et omne funebrium exsequiarum officium per ordinem celebravit! O quam novum spectaculum quantaque admiratione dignissimum, si totum illud simul mortalis capere potuisset intuitus! Aderat siquidem congregatis fidelibus absens, aberat vero praesens. Nimirum a semetipso etiam longe positus, hic viventibus filiis commissae pastoralis curae reddebat debitum, illic defuncto fratri piae humanitatis impendebat officium. Sed et quam leve, quam velox vehiculum noster episcopus habuit, qui, non dicam puncto, non momento, sed in brevissimi temporis ictu tam longa terrarum spatia transmeavit? Nescit sane currus ille viarum asperitatibus reprimi, ignorat oppositionis sufflamine retardari. Verumtamen hoc tam grande miraculum, quo ab aliquo sanctorum ostensum fuisse rarius auditur, eo ab his, qui non credunt omnia possibilia esse credenti, fortasse difficilius creditur.

But why do we speak these things concerning reprobate pastors, since even men of the highest holiness, having taken up the office of pastoral care, even if they by no means rush forth into evils—which God forbid—nevertheless are often somewhat diminished from the very perfection of good, necessity compelling? Hence it is that Blessed Pope Gregory glories that in the conversation of his former life he had transcended all visible things, but afterwards he complains with pious lamentation that he is entangled in exterior cares (GREG. in praef. lib. I Dialog.). Hence it is also that it is read concerning Blessed Martin, bishop of Tours, that there had been greater power in him before his episcopate than after his episcopate (SEVER. SULPIT., Vita S. Martini, lib. II. cap. 5). Although it is to be believed without doubt that for holy preachers, whatever is subtracted from their own perfection for the custody of others is increased much more largely and much more abundantly in acquiring the gains of their subjects.

Consider therefore, most beloved brothers, how wonderful a man was blessed Severus, to whom the merit of holiness was added by the care of the government he took up, which for other most excellent men was accustomed to diminish. For that which for others is often a cause of descent, for him is proved to have existed as the material of promotion; and from there the summit of perfection was increased for him, from where for most perfect men it is generally not doubted to have been diminished. For behold, before the office of the committed prelacy he is known indeed to have led a life of virtues, but he is by no means reported to have performed signs of virtues; but after his ordination, the signs of miracles performed through him cry out with open voices how much his later merits transcend his former life.

For how illustrious, my most beloved brothers, how stupendous was that distinguished miracle, by which namely during the very solemnities of the Masses, suddenly rapt in ecstasy, he sought the town of Modena in spirit, commended the soul of his deceased brother and co-bishop to God, placed the body in the tomb, and celebrated every office of the funeral obsequies in order! O what a new spectacle and how most worthy of admiration, if a mortal gaze could have grasped all that at once! For indeed he was absent to the gathered faithful, yet present; he was away, yet near. Certainly placed far even from himself, here he rendered the debt of the committed pastoral care to his living children, there he impended the office of pious humanity to his deceased brother. But also how light, how swift a vehicle our bishop had, who—I will not say in a point, not in a moment, but in the stroke of a most brief time—passed through such long spaces of lands? Surely that chariot knows not how to be repressed by the roughness of the ways, it knows not how to be retarded by the brake of opposition. Nevertheless, this so great miracle, which is more rarely heard to have been shown by any of the saints, is perhaps more difficultly believed by those who do not believe all things to be possible to one who believes.

Quid enim rarius, quid admiratione dignius quam purum spiritum corpus corporaliter sepelire? Et, ut ita dixerim, animam visibiliter animam commendare? Sed ad hoc credendum cito animum flectimus, si et alia divinae virtutis opera studiose pensamus. Liquet profecto quia mobilioris naturae est spiritus, quam corpus, et certe, Scriptura teste, novimus, quod propheta Habacuc ex Judaea sublevatus, repente est in Chaldaeam cum prandio deportatus. Quo videlicet prandio Danielem prophetam refecit, seseque in Judaea iterum invenit (Dan. XIV). Si igitur tam longe Habacuc potuit sub momento corporaliter ire et prandium deferre, quid mirum si beatus Severus obtainit, quatenus per spiritum iret, et defuncto fratri funeris officium exhiberet? Ut sicut ille ad deferendum prophetae cibum corporis corporaliter perrexit, ita iste ad commendandum Deo beatissimi hominis spiritum spiritaliter pergeret.

Jam vero illud quantae virtutis fuit, quantaeque potentiae, quod illi aridus cinis olim jam defuncti cadaveris paruit, et ad vocis ejus imperium exanimata uxoris caro, ut locum filiae cederet, in angustum se sepulturae angulum coarctavit? Justo quippe Dei judicio, mulier, quae olim illum in hac vita subsannando despexerat, jam, mutata sententia, ejus praecepta humiliter observabat. Nimirum quem nentem stamina in humili ergasterio pauperculum noverat, jam tunc in aula superni Regis quam magnus senator esset, his, qui falli non poterant, oculis attendebat. Sed et hoc incredibile quis forsitan judicat, quamvis venerabilem, et sanctissimum virum, adhuc tamen in hac corruptibili carne degentem, insensibilem potuisse pulverem suis legibus subdere, cujus animam constat ad illud jam invisibile judicium transmigrasse? Hoc tamen etiam facile creditur, si collata hominibus divina gratia subtiliter indagetur. Nunquid enim Petrus in ista adhuc carne non erat, qui ex ore Veritatis audiebat: «Quodcunque ligaveris super terram erit ligatum et in coelis: et quodcunque solveris super terram erit solutum et in coelis?» (Matth. XVI.) Cujus nunc vicem in ligando et solvendo possident quicunque locum sancti regiminis fide et moribus tenent. Sed ut tanta valeat homo de terra, coeli et terrae Conditor in terram venit e coelo; atque ut judicare caro non solum de carne, sed etiam de spiritibus possit, hoc ei largiri dignatus est factus pro hominibus Deus caro. Quia inde surrexit ultra se infirmitas nostra, unde sub se infirmata est firmitas Dei.

For what is rarer, what more worthy of admiration than for a pure spirit corporally to bury a body? And, as I may so say, for a soul visibly to commend a soul? But we quickly bend our mind to believing this, if we also studiously weigh other works of divine power. For it is clear that spirit is of a more mobile nature than body, and certainly, with Scripture as witness, we know that the prophet Habakkuk, raised from Judea, was suddenly transported into Chaldea with a meal. With which meal namely he refreshed the prophet Daniel, and found himself again in Judea (Dan. XIV). If therefore Habakkuk was able to go corporally and carry a meal so far in a moment, what wonder if blessed Severus obtained that he might go through the spirit, and exhibit the office of the funeral to his deceased brother? So that just as the former proceeded corporally to carry food to the body of the prophet, so the latter might proceed spiritually to commend to God the spirit of the most blessed man.

Now indeed of how great virtue and how great power was it, that the dry ash of a formerly deceased cadaver obeyed him, and at the command of his voice the lifeless flesh of his wife, that she might yield her place to her daughter, contracted herself into a narrow corner of the burial? For certainly by a just judgment of God, the woman, who formerly had despised him by mocking him in this life, now, her opinion changed, humbly observed his precepts. Namely, she who had known him as a poor little man spinning threads in a humble workshop (*ergasterio*), now with eyes that could not be deceived, she attended to how great a senator he was in the court of the supernal King. But perhaps someone judges this incredible, that a man, although venerable and most holy, still dwelling in this corruptible flesh, was able to subject insensible dust to his laws, whose soul it is established had already migrated to that invisible judgment? Yet this is also easily believed, if the divine grace conferred upon men is subtly investigated. For was Peter not still in this flesh, who heard from the mouth of Truth: "Whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven: and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven (Matth. XVI)?" Whose turn in binding and loosing all those now possess who hold the place of holy government in faith and morals. But so that man might prevail so greatly from the earth, the Founder of heaven and earth came to the earth from heaven; and so that flesh might be able to judge not only concerning flesh, but also concerning spirits, He who was made God-flesh for men deigned to bestow this upon it. Because from there our infirmity rose beyond itself, whence the firmness of God was made infirm below itself.

Sed cur ista de antiquis B. Severi miraculis dicimus, cum hodie non pauca prodigiorum signa in venerabili sepulturae suae basilica fieri frequenter audiamus? Nam, ut de caeteris sileam, illud unum quantis est praeconiis dignum quantaque laetitia ad divinae omnipotentiae gloriam referendum, quod sub ipso altaris sacratissimi sui corporis clarissima sensim emanataqua, diversis languentium valetudinibus profutura! Nam si fides bibentium exigat, mox ut eam pectora aegrota percipiunt, protinus de infirmitate ad salutem pristinam convalescunt. Et, ut mirabilem rem fieri mirabiliter audias, non in vernalis inclementia temporis, non in autumnalis inundantiae pluviis, non in imbriferae algoribus hiemis, quando ex diversis saxorum molibus solet aqua tenuiter exsudare, sed in ipso fervidae aestatis ardore eam noveris ex arida calce et duris lapidibus ebullire. Ut videlicet quando major incumbit necessitas aegritudinum, tunc potissimum conferat miseratio divina remedium, et humanae infirmitati, quae tunc ex ignei caloris gignitur vitio, medicorum more, vim curationis ex contrario objiciat elemento. Cui illud conferri miraculum satis rationabiliter potest, quod similiter Nilus Aegypti fluvius non alio, nisi aestivo tempore sese in cumulum elevat, plana quaeque hinc inde per circuitum irrigat, et terrarum venas largo suae inundationis madore fecundat. Ne igitur humana vecordia divinae virtutis opera naturae viribus tribuat, saltem ex ipso, quo fiunt, tempore, cui jure deputentur, addiscat; et tanto alacrius ad referendas Creatori suo gratias surgat, quanto et ipsas naturarum vices mutatas suae utilitatis gratia non ignorat.

Ecce enim omnipotens Deus antiqua operationis suae miracula repetit, ecce iterum per alterum Moysen aquam de petra producit (Exod. XVII); Israeliticum nobis saeculum renovat, quo per exteriora beneficia, utpote verum Israel, ad amorem nos suae visionis accendat. Ecce de beatissimi confessoris sui Ecclesia alterum nobis quodammodo paradisum restituit, cujus saluberrimo fonte nostrae fragilitatis terram clementer infundit.

Agamus igitur, dilectissimi, gratias Creatori nostro, qui idcirco adhuc producit aquam de petra rupis, ut per hanc etiam hauriamus aquam in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris (Isa. XII). Illam videlicet, de qua ipse in Evangelio dicit: «Qui biberit aquam quam ego do, fiet in eo fons aquae salientis in vitam aeternam (Joan. IV).» Et iterum clamat dicens: «Si quis sitit, veniat ad me, et bibat, et de ventre ejus fluent aquae vivae (Joan. VII).» Quanti sunt hodie, qui si petram illam, ex qua in tempore Moysis aqua producta est, cernere potuissent, lucrum non minimum deputarent.

But why do we speak these things concerning the ancient miracles of Blessed Severus, when today we hear not a few signs of wonders frequently performed in the venerable basilica of his burial? For, to be silent concerning others, that one thing—with how great praises is it worthy and with how great joy to be referred to the glory of divine omnipotence—that from under the very altar of his most sacred body there sensibly emanates the clearest water, to be of profit for the various health-needs of the languishing! For if the faith of the drinkers requires it, as soon as the sick breasts perceive it, they immediately convalesce from infirmity to former health. And, that you may hear a wonderful thing wonderfully performed, not in the inclement time of spring, not in the rains of autumnal inundation, not in the chills of the rain-bearing winter, when water is accustomed to exude thinly from various masses of stones, but in the very heat of the fervid summer you should know it to bubble up from dry lime and hard stones. Namely, so that when a greater necessity of sicknesses lies upon them, then most especially divine mercy may confer a remedy, and to human infirmity, which is then born from the vice of fiery heat, He may—after the manner of physicians—oppose the power of healing from the contrary element. To which that miracle can reasonably enough be compared, that similarly the Nile river of Egypt elevates itself into a heap in no other time but the summer, irrigates all the plains on this side and that through the circuit, and fecundates the veins of the lands with the large moisture of its inundation. Therefore, let not human folly attribute the works of divine power to the forces of nature; let it at least learn from the very time in which they are performed to whom they should rightly be deputed; and let it rise so much more eagerly to return thanks to its Creator, as it is not ignorant that the very changes of the natures are for the sake of its utility.

For behold, Almighty God repeats the ancient miracles of His operation; behold, again He produces water from the rock through another Moses (Exod. XVII); He renews for us the Israelite age, by which through exterior benefits He may kindle us, as the true Israel, to the love of His vision. Behold, from the Church of His most blessed confessor He has in a certain way restored to us another paradise, from whose most salutary fountain He clemently pours into the earth of our fragility.

Let us therefore, most beloved, give thanks to our Creator, who for this reason still produces water from the rock of the cliff, that through this we also may draw water in joy from the fountains of the Savior (Isa. XII). That one namely, concerning which He Himself says in the Gospel: "He who shall drink the water which I give, there shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life (Joan. IV)." And again He cries out, saying: "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink, and from his belly shall flow waters of living water (Joan. VII)." How many are there today, who if they had been able to see that rock from which water was produced in the time of Moses, would have deputed it as no small gain.

Isti itaque nunc beati Severi ingrediantur ecclesiam, et in multis simul fieri lapidibus videant, quod in uno fuisse factum laetitia piae devotionis exsultant. Hoc etiam superaddito quod aqua illa sitim solummodo bibentibus auferebat, ista etiam diversas languentium aegritudines curat. Illa dum biberetur, simplicis aquae de se dabat indicium, ista dum medetur, diversorum aromatum et medicinalium specierum implet officium.

Haec igitur tot et tam praeclara miracula, fratres charissimi, ad verae utilitatis lucra convertite, et per exteriora divini muneris beneficia, ad interiora quoque medullitus anhelate. Quid enim prodest caduca haec et transitoria bona temporaliter ex divina benignitate percipere, si non contingat ad aeterni quoque boni suscipienda praemia pervenire? Mementote quid Judaeis de antiquis eorum patribus Veritas dixit: «Patres, inquit, vestri manducaverunt manna in deserto, et mortui sunt (Joan. VI).» Perpendite etiam quanta sit in coelis sanctorum gloria, quibus contra naturae suae ordinem ipsa in terris famulantur et obediunt elementa. Quid enim sanctorum animae sive in coelo, sive in terra, sive etiam in abysso non possunt, qui cum ipso, qui omnibus praesidet, unum sunt? Ad illam igitur, dilectissimi, tantae gloriae dignitatem totis nisibus tendite; ad illam quotidie sanctarum virtutum et piae conversationis gressibus properate. Contemnenda quippe sunt vobis cuncta quae cernitis, si ad ea vultis pertingere quae speratis. Attestante etenim beato Paulo, non possumus hic gaudere de saeculo, et illic regnare cum Deo (Rom. XII). Qui iterum dicit: «Non contemplantibus nobis quae videntur, sed quae non videntur. Quae enim videntur, temporalia sunt, quae autem non videntur, aeterna sunt (II Cor. IV).» Fluxa igitur et seductoria immundi hujus mundi blandimenta despicite, minas ejus animi fortitudine superate, surgentia carnis incentiva [incendia] reprimite, mentes vestras, auxiliante Deo, in virtutibus dilatate, torporis et negligentiae frigus de cordibus vestris expellite, ad illud ineffabile supernae beatitudinis gaudium flammato mentis desiderio jugiter suspirate. Nam speculator [spectator] ille, qui corda vestra ad se directa delectabiliter inspicit, libenter etiam vobis suae societatis januam pandit Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo VI.

DE SANCTO ELEUCHADIO, EPISCOPO RAVENNATE ET CONFESSORE. (XIV FEBR.)

Therefore, let these now enter the church of Blessed Severus, and see performed in many stones at once what they exult with the joy of pious devotion to have been done in one. With this also added, that that water only took away thirst from the drinkers; this one also cures the various sicknesses of the languishing. That one, while it was drunk, gave an indication of simple water from itself; this one, while it heals, fulfills the office of various aromatics and medicinal species.

Convert these so many and so illustrious miracles, most beloved brothers, into the gains of true utility, and through the exterior benefits of the divine gift, pant also for the interior ones from the marrow. For what does it profit to perceive these deciduous and transitory goods temporally from divine benignity, if it does not happen that one reaches the prizes of the eternal good which are to be taken up? Remember what Truth said to the Jews concerning their ancient fathers: "Your fathers," He said, "ate manna in the desert, and they died (Joan. VI)." Consider also how great is the glory of the saints in heaven, whom even the elements themselves serve and obey on earth against the order of their nature. For what can the souls of the saints not do, whether in heaven, or on earth, or even in the abyss, who are one with Him who presides over all? Therefore, most beloved, strive with all your efforts for that dignity of such great glory; hasten toward it daily with the steps of holy virtues and pious conversation. Certainly all things which you see are to be contemned by you, if you wish to reach those things which you hope for. For as Blessed Paul witnesses, we cannot rejoice in the world here, and reign with God there (Rom. XII). Who again says: "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal (II Cor. IV)." Therefore, despise the fluid and seductive flatteries of this unclean world, overcome its threats with fortitude of mind, repress the rising incentives [fires] of the flesh, dilate your minds, with God helping, in virtues, expel the cold of torpor and negligence from your hearts, sigh continually with a flaming desire of the mind for that ineffable joy of supernal beatitude. For that watcher [spectator], who delectably inspects your hearts directed toward Himself, also willingly opens to you the door of His society, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ages of ages. Amen.

Sermon VI.

CONCERNING SAINT ELEUCHADIUS, BISHOP OF RAVENNA AND CONFESSOR. (FEB 14.)

Hodierna festivitas, fratres charissimi, geminum sanctae devotioni vestrae, imo nostrae gaudium cumulat, quia dum venerandi confessoris Eleuchadii solemnia celebramus, necessario mox etiam beati triumphatoris Christi Apollinaris ad memoriam praeclara gesta reducimus. Quia enim, ut Salomon ait, «gloria patris est filius sapiens (Prov. X et XV),» sic alterius causa pendet ex altero, ut quisquis unius laudes digne retulerit, alterius etiam insigne praeconium tacere non possit. Et quia Veritas dicit: «Non potest filius facere, nisi quod viderit patrem facientem (Joan. V):» sic iste beatus alumnus subsecutus est paterna vestigia, ita verae fidei praedicando rectam tenuit lineam, sic religiose vivendo sancto praeceptori consonam exhibuit clientelam, ut ei merito succederet in regimen, cujus imitator exstiterat sanctitate. Sicut enim beatus Petrus princeps apostolici senatus tres inter caeteros eminentiores cognoscitur habuisse discipulos, qui sibi postmodum in pontificatus arce per ordinem successerunt, primo videlicet Linus, deinde Cletus, tertius Clemens, ita nihilominus et beatus Apollinaris quatuor egregios discipulos habuit, post felicem martyrii sui gloriam sibimet in ecclesiastico regimine succedentes, Aderitum scilicet, et beatum hunc, cui praesens sermo famulaturus est, Eleuchadium, subinde Martianum, postremo Calocerum.

Erat autem Eleuchadius iste philosophus, sicut in ipsa beati magistri narratur historia. Superata est ergo sapientia Platonis a discipulo piscatoris. Misit rete verbi in profundam salsuginem Ravennatis oceani, et magliam auratam ad fidei littus traxit. Porro cujus magister olim noverat cuncta per stagna naviculam regere, discipulum docuit cum arguta dialecticorum versutia disputare; docuit, inquam, discipulum acris ingenii et acutae facundiae homines simplici sermone concludere, qui ad includendos per profunda pelagi pisces vilia consueverat retia subnodare. Plane postquam navicularius pelagi clavicularius constitutus est coeli; discipuli piscatorum magistri facti sunt oratorum; et sapientia mundi victa est a simplicitate Christi, quia enim, ut ait Apostolus, non cognovit mundus per sapientiam Deum, placuit Deo per stultitiam praedicationis salvos facere credentes (I Cor. I). Hac simplicitate Paulus, qui se judicat inter Corinthios nihil scire, nisi Christum Jesum, et hunc crucifixum (I Cor. II), superavit Dionysium Areopagitam apud Athenas. Hac simplicitate conclusit beatus Apollinaris Eleuchadium philosophum in urbe Ravenna; qui et ipse consultus de curationum peritia, respondit nihil se scire sine nomine Jesu. Verumtamen utrique huic prudenter simplici beatus Petrus sapientiae testimonium perhibet: nam de Paulo ait: Sicut charissimus frater noster Paulus secundum datam sibi sapientiam scripsit vobis (II Petr. III). Apollinari vero dicit: «Ecce eruditus es de omnibus quae fecit Jesus.»

Today's festival, most beloved brothers, crowns your holy devotion, or rather ours, with a double joy, because while we celebrate the solemnities of the venerable confessor Eleuchadius, we necessarily also soon recall to memory the illustrious deeds of the blessed victor of Christ, Apollinaris. For as Solomon says, "A wise son is the glory of his father (Prov. X and XV)," so the cause of one depends upon the other, such that whoever worthily relates the praises of one cannot keep silent about the illustrious commendation of the other. And because Truth says: "The son can do nothing, except what he has seen the father doing (Joan. V):" so this blessed pupil followed in his father's footsteps, thus in preaching the true faith he held the straight line, thus in living religiously he exhibited a service consonant with his holy preceptor, that he worthily succeeded him in government, whose imitator he had stood in holiness. For just as Blessed Peter, the prince of the apostolic senate, is known to have had three more eminent disciples among the others, who subsequently succeeded him in order in the height of the pontificate, first namely Linus, then Cletus, and thirdly Clement, so in no less a manner did Blessed Apollinaris have four illustrious disciples, succeeding him in ecclesiastical government after the happy glory of his martyrdom, namely Aderitus, and this blessed one to whom the present sermon is to do service, Eleuchadius, then Martianus, and finally Calocerum.

Now this Eleuchadius was a philosopher, as is related in the history of his blessed master. Therefore the wisdom of Plato was overcome by a disciple of a fisherman. He sent the net of the word into the deep saltiness of the Ravennese ocean, and drew a golden mesh to the shore of faith. Furthermore, he whose master once knew how to guide a little boat through all the pools, taught the disciple to dispute with the subtle craftiness of the dialecticians; he taught, I say, a disciple of sharp genius and acute eloquence to enclose men with simple speech, who had been accustomed to knot together cheap nets for enclosing fish through the depths of the sea. Clearly, after the boatman of the sea was appointed the key-bearer of heaven, the disciples of fishermen were made the masters of orators; and the wisdom of the world was conquered by the simplicity of Christ, for because, as the Apostle says, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe (I Cor. I). By this simplicity Paul, who judged himself to know nothing among the Corinthians except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (I Cor. II), overcame Dionysius the Areopagite at Athens. By this simplicity Blessed Apollinaris enclosed Eleuchadius the philosopher in the city of Ravenna; who himself, when consulted concerning skill in cures, replied that he knew nothing without the name of Jesus. Nevertheless, to both of these prudently simple men Blessed Peter offers testimony of wisdom: for concerning Paul he says: "Just as our most beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him (II Petr. III)." To Apollinaris he says: "Behold, you have been instructed concerning all things which Jesus did."

Sed qui Deo sapientes erant mundo se velut fatuos exhibebant. Stulta siquidem mundi elegit Deus, ut confunderet sapientes (I Cor. I). Atque ut magis stupeas, ipsos imperite sapientes a vano superbae sapientiae suae tumore dejecit, ac deinceps in auctoritatem liberae praedicationis erexit, ut idipsum postmodum constanter astruerent quod anxiabantur ante crudeliter impugnare. Quod Moyses tunc mystice figuravit, cum arripiens vitulum aureum igne combussit, ad pulverem usque contrivit, fluctibusque conspergens Israeliticum ex eo populum propinavit (Exod. XXXII). Quid est enim per figuram vitulus ille conflatilis, nisi corpus diaboli? Homines scilicet in omnibus perfidiae, simul et idololatriae errore decepti, ac sub ipso suo pestifero capite tanquam diversa membra, sacrilega conspiratione conjuncti, super quos nimirum ille nequitiae spiritus, velut auctor, praesidens insolenter erigitur, et tanquam caput per tyrannidem suo corpori dominatur? Aureus autem vitulus fuisse describitur, quia videtur idololatriae ritus velut a sapientibus institutus. Auro quippe sapientia designatur, sicut per Salomonem dicitur: «Thesaurus desiderabilis in ore sapientis (Prov. II).» Aureus itaque fuit vitulus, quia mundi sapientes ante novae gratiam fidei daemoniacae culturae fuisse probantur auctores. De quibus nimirum dicit Apostolus: «Quia cum cognovissent Deum, non sicut Deum glorificaverunt, aut gratias egerunt, sed evanuerunt in cogitationibus suis, et obscuratum est insipiens cor eorum, dicentes enim se esse sapientes, stulti facti sunt, et mutaverunt gloriam incorruptibilis Dei in similitudinem imaginis corruptibilis hominis, et volucrum, et quadrupedum et serpentium (Rom. I).» Per hanc itaque vesanae sapientiae vanitatem poetae, philosophi, magi, siderum rimatores omniumque disciplinarum liberalium instructi peritia, prodigiosa daemoniorum solebant adorare figmenta.

In vitulo igitur significatum est totum corpus, id est, omnis societas gentilium idololatriae deditorum. Moyses itaque vitulum igne combussit quia Redemptor noster, quem ille signaverat, male conspirata [f. conspirantia] corda gentilium flamma suae charitatis accendit. Unde et ipse dicit: «Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut accendatur? (Luc. XII)» Et Propheta: «Non est, inquit, qui se abscondat a calore ejus (Psal. XVIII).» In mente ergo gentilium repente divinus ignis accenditur, ut in eis irrationabilis idololatriae bestialis forma solvatur. Totum deinde corpus vituli hujus in pulverem comminuitur, quia gentilis illa societas diabolicae conspirationis in unum arte conflata, ad adventum Christi quodam velut malleo salutiferae correptionis extusa atque a rigoris sui duritia divini verbi est virtute contrita. Ad verbum siquidem veritatis salubriter comminuitur, quae male integra in superbiae suae forma insensibiliter stare videbatur. Deinde in aquam spargitur, ut Israeliticum ex eo populum bibat.

But those who were wise for God showed themselves as fools for the world. For God chose the foolish things of the world, that He might confound the wise (I Cor. I). And so that you may wonder more, He cast down those unskilfully wise from the vain swelling of their proud wisdom, and thereafter raised them up into the authority of free preaching, that they might subsequently constantly assert that which they had previously anxiously and cruelly attacked. Which Moses then mystically figured, when seizing the golden calf he burned it with fire, ground it even to dust, and sprinkling it upon the waves, gave it to the Israelite people to drink (Exod. XXXII). For what is that cast calf by figure, except the body of the devil? Men, namely, deceived in all things by the error of perfidy and simultaneously of idolatry, and joined in a sacrilegious conspiracy under their very pestiferous head as diverse members, over whom certainly that spirit of wickedness, as the author, is insolently raised presiding, and as the head dominates his body through tyranny? Now it is described as having been a golden calf, because the ritual of idolatry seems as if instituted by the wise. For by gold wisdom is designated, as is said through Solomon: "A desirable treasure in the mouth of the wise (Prov. II)." Therefore the calf was golden, because the wise of the world before the grace of the new faith are proved to have been the authors of demoniacal worship. Concerning whom certainly the Apostle says: "Because when they had known God, they did not glorify Him as God, or give thanks, but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened, for saying they were wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts and of serpents (Rom. I)." Through this vanity of insane wisdom, the poets, philosophers, magi, scrutinizers of the stars and those instructed in the skill of all liberal disciplines, were accustomed to adore the prodigious figments of the demons.

In the calf, therefore, the whole body was signified, that is, the whole society of the gentiles devoted to idolatry. Moses therefore burned the calf with fire because our Redeemer, whom he had signified, kindled the evilly conspiring hearts of the gentiles with the flame of His charity. Whence He Himself also says: "I have come to send fire upon the earth, and what do I wish except that it be kindled? (Luc. XII)" And the Prophet: "There is no one," he says, "who can hide himself from his heat (Psal. XVIII)." In the mind of the gentiles, therefore, the divine fire is suddenly kindled, so that in them the irrational bestial form of idolatry may be dissolved. Then the whole body of this calf is crushed into dust, because that gentile society, fused into one by the art of diabolical conspiracy, at the coming of Christ was beaten out by a certain hammer of salutary correction, so to speak, and from the hardness of its rigor was crushed by the power of the divine word. For at the word of truth it is healthfully crushed, which seemed to stand insensibly whole in the form of its pride. Then it is scattered into the water, so that the Israelite people may drink of it.

Comminutus denique vitulus in aquam mittitur, quia humiliatus gentilis populus lavacro salutiferi fontis necesse est abluatur. Quem protinus Israelitae bibunt, quia sancti praedicatores Evangelii, qui vere Israelitae sunt, quos ad Dominicum corpus, quod est Ecclesia, transferunt, in sua membra suscipiendo quasi bibendo convertunt. Quorum videlicet Israelitarum primo dictum est: «Macta et manduca (Act. X);» quod tantumdem est ac si diceretur: «Tere, et bibe.» Sic, sic ille vitulus per ignem zeli, et aciem verbi, aquamque baptismatis ab eis potius absorptus est quos conatus est absorbere: in eos ipse transfusus est, quos in sua, hoc est diabolica, tentaverat membra transferre.

Verumtamen quia Moyses non in hoc metam ultionis fixit, ut idololum duntaxat infringeret, sed insuper addidit ut et viginti tria millia hominum trucidaret, mystice docuit, nequaquam sufficere, si ab idololatriae cultu, vel pravitate vitae quisque convertitur, nisi et propria vitia gladio spiritus mortificare conetur. Unde et praedicator egregius: «Mortificate, inquit, membra vestra, quae sunt super terram, fornicationem, immunditiam, luxuriam, concupiscentiam malam et avaritiam, quae est idolorum servitus (Col. III).» Et notandum quia sicut hic vitia membra nostra esse dicuntur, ita et illic qui perempti sunt, cum interfectoribus suis propinquitatis necessitudine jungebantur, sicut per Moysen dictum est: «Haec dicit Dominus Deus Israel: Ponat vir gladium super femur suum; ite, et redite de porta usque in portam per medium castrorum, et occidat unusquisque fratrem, et amicum et proximum suum (Exod. XXXII).» Si quem ergo delectat in arma consurgere, quisquis anhelat adversus hostium cuneos dimicare, vertat manus in se, et illic plures inveniet adversarios obtruncandos, unde videlicet post victoriam non homicidae foedum nomen incurrat, sed gloriosus potius triumphator appareat, unde certe non sanctuarii mereatur excludi liminibus, sed consecrans semetipsum Domino, divinae gratiae benedictionibus augeatur, sicut et illis dictum est: «Consecrastis, inquit, manus vestras hodie Domino, unusquisque in filio et fratre suo, ut detur vobis benedictio (Ibid.).» Quod autem ii, qui caesi sunt, viginti tria millia fuisse referunt, numerus trium millium peremptorum triplicem formam indicat peccatorum. Omne quippe peccatum, aut facto, aut verbo, aut cogitatione committimus. Sed quoniam illic et denarius numerus geminatur, datur intelligi quia sicut Decalogum praeceptorum culpa carnis, simul et animae servare contempsimus, sic etiam utriusque vitia, virtutum armis atterere et mortificare debemus.

Finally, the crushed calf is put into the water, because it is necessary that the humbled gentile people be washed in the washing of the salutary fountain. Which the Israelites immediately drink, because the holy preachers of the Gospel, who are truly Israelites, convert those whom they transfer to the Lord's body, which is the Church, into their own members by receiving them as if by drinking. To which Israelites it was first said: "Kill and eat (Act. X);" which is just as if it were said: "Grind, and drink." Thus, thus that calf through the fire of zeal, and the edge of the word, and the water of baptism, was rather absorbed by those whom it tried to absorb: it was transfused into them whom it had attempted to transfer into its own, that is, diabolical, members.

Nevertheless, because Moses did not fix the limit of vengeance in this, merely to break the idol, but moreover added that he should slaughter twenty-three thousand men, he taught mystically that it is by no means sufficient if anyone is converted from the worship of idolatry or depravity of life, unless he also strives to mortify his own vices with the sword of the spirit. Whence also the illustrious preacher says: "Mortify your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence and avarice, which is the service of idols (Col. III)." And it is to be noted that just as here our vices are said to be members, so also there those who were destroyed were joined to their slayers by the necessity of kinship, just as was said through Moses: "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: Let every man put his sword upon his thigh; go and return from gate to gate through the middle of the camp, and let every man kill his brother, and friend and neighbor (Exod. XXXII)." If anyone therefore delights to rise up in arms, whoever pants to fight against the battalions of the enemies, let him turn his hands upon himself, and there he will find more adversaries to be cut down, whence clearly after victory he may not incur the foul name of a homicide, but rather appear a glorious father-triumphator, whence certainly he may not deserve to be excluded from the thresholds of the sanctuary, but consecrating himself to the Lord, he may be increased by the blessings of divine grace, just as was also said to them: "You have consecrated your hands today to the Lord, every man in his son and brother, that a blessing may be given to you (Ibid.)." But as for the fact that those who were slain are reported to have been twenty-three thousand, the number of three thousand destroyed indicates the triple form of sins. For we commit every sin either by deed, or word, or thought. But since there the number of ten is also doubled, it is given to be understood that just as we contemned keeping the Decalogue of precepts by the fault of the flesh and simultaneously of the soul, so also we ought to wear down and mortify the vices of both with the arms of virtues.

Beatus igitur Eleuchadius tunc philosophus magnus, tanquam aureus vitulus contritus est malleo praedicationis, et transfusus est in membra corporis Christi. Tunc doctor terrenae sapientiae, nunc magister effectus est ecclesiasticae disciplinae. Tunc naturalium causarum rimabatur indaginem, nunc omnium naturarum ipsum perspicue contemplatur auctorem. Et qui tunc sidera radio fortasse notaverat, nunc coeli machinam cum sideribus volvi gratulabundus aspectat. Nimirum qui prius fuerat philosophus veritatis, conversus ad Dominum praedicator factus est veritatis; tertius scilicet a beato Petro apostolo in ordine discipulatus, tertius etiam nihilominus a beato Apollinari in arce pontificatus. Et personarum quidem ordo productus, sed eadem fidei puritas, quae ex ipso summo et originali fonte processerat, per devexam alvei seriem decurrebat. Nam a Christo in Petrum, a Petro in Apollinarem, ab Apollinari in Eleuchadium coelestis eloquii fluvius emanavit; ut illud Psalmistae praeconium impleretur: «Qui emittit eloquium suum terrae, velociter currit sermo ejus (Psal. CXLVII).» Beati denique cultores et adjutores Christi, Apollinaris et Eleuchadius; pater videlicet et filius, magister atque discipulus, unius operis ministerium, unius, ut ita loquar, agri fundum, unius susceperunt vineae colonatum. Ille nimirum, ut obscura silvarum condensa succideret; iste vero ut residuos arbustorum truncos et horrescentium veprium dumeta radicitus exstirparet. Ille, ut acuto verbi vomere dura squalentis deserti rura proscinderet; iste ut nihilominus sanctae praedicationis sarculo tumentium vitiorum post eum glebas effringeret et bonorum operum frugibus novalia diligenter exculta vestiret. Ille, ut cum Paulo plantaret; iste ut cum Apolline rigaret (I Cor. III). Atque ut altius repetam, ille cum Moyse populum Domini diviso mari Rubro in deserta transposuit (Exod. XIV); iste cum Josue, magistro succedens, eumdem populum in terram repromissionis primus introduxit (Jos. IV). Ille docuit qualiter Aegyptum Israel accola sperneret; iste vero qualiter terram lactis et mellis irriguam distributis invicem sortibus possideret. Alter nimirum colla de ferreo jugo Pharaonis excutere, alter admonuit triumphatricibus plantis devictas hostium calcare cervices. Alter edocuit servitutis opprobrium quam celeriter fugerent, alter autem ipsos libertatis titulos quam cautissime custodiirent.

Blessed Eleuchadius, therefore, then a great philosopher, was crushed like the golden calf by the hammer of preaching, and was transfused into the members of the body of Christ. Then a teacher of earthly wisdom, he has now been made a master of ecclesiastical discipline. Then he searched into the investigation of natural causes; now he clearly contemplates the Author of all natures Himself. And he who then had perhaps noted the stars with a rod, now joyfully beholds the machine of heaven revolve with the stars. Doubtless he who had previously been a philosopher of truth, having turned to the Lord, was made a preacher of truth; third namely from Blessed Peter the Apostle in the order of discipleship, and no less third from Blessed Apollinaris in the height of the pontificate. And though the order of persons was extended, yet the same purity of faith, which had proceeded from that very highest and original source, flowed down through the sloping series of the channel. For from Christ into Peter, from Peter into Apollinaris, and from Apollinaris into Eleuchadius, the river of heavenly eloquence emanated; so that that proclamation of the Psalmist might be fulfilled: "He who sends his eloquence to the earth, his word runs swiftly (Psal. CXLVII)." Finally, the blessed cultivators and helpers of Christ, Apollinaris and Eleuchadius; father namely and son, master and disciple, took up the ministry of one work, the estate of one field, so to speak, the cultivation of one vineyard. The former, clearly, that he might cut down the dense obscurities of the woods; the latter, however, that he might radically extirpate the remaining trunks of trees and the thickets of bristling briars. The former, that he might cut through the hard fields of the squalid desert with the sharp plowshare of the word; the latter that no less he might break up the clods of swelling vices after him with the hoe of holy preaching, and clothe the diligently cultivated fallow lands with the fruits of good works. The former, that he might plant with Paul; the latter that he might water with Apollos (I Cor. III). And to repeat from higher up, the former with Moses transferred the people of the Lord into the deserts by dividing the Red Sea (Exod. XIV); the latter with Joshua, succeeding the master, first introduced the same people into the land of promise (Jos. IV). The former taught how Israel as a sojourner should despise Egypt; the latter how they should possess the land flowing with milk and honey, with their portions distributed in turn. One certainly admonished them to shake off their necks from the iron yoke of Pharaoh; the other to tread upon the conquered necks of the enemies with triumphant feet. One taught how swiftly they should flee the reproach of servitude; the other, however, how most cautiously they should guard the very titles of liberty.

Neque vero credendum est, fratres mei, B. Eleuchadium, dum adhuc viveret, martyrii caruisse laboribus, etsi non fuerit martyrio consummatus. Videbat nimirum gentilitatis nuper exstinctae nonnullas adhuc superesse reliquias; dolebat in populo sibi commisso, vel extrema superstitiosi ritus vestigia remansisse, atque ideo licet persequentium manus gladios non exereret, cruciabatur anima sancta pii zeli ac paternae compassionis incendio concremata. Quid enim prodest, si quisquam catholice credat et gentiliter vivat? Aut quomodo credulitas recta cum vita concordat haeretica? Quid enim juvat, si fides adsit apostolica, ubi conversatio ducitur Ariana? De iis etenim, qui catholice credunt et haeretice vivunt, conqueritur beatus Apostolus dicens: «Confitentur se nosse Deum, factis autem negant (Tit. I).» Cum sive credendo, sive vivendo, Deum negare nihil sit aliud absque dubio quam perire. Quapropter beatus pontifex Eleuchadius non contemnendum pertulit in ipsa Ecclesiae pace martyrium, quandoquidem et si non cum perfide credentibus, sed perverse viventibus infoederabilem probatur habuisse conflictum, quanquam et in fidei doctrina desudasse cum non sine ratione colligimus, cum omnium Ravennati metropoli adjacentium dioecesium civitates et oppida, nullos pene recondere martyres agnoscamus.

Unde beati Apollinaris quanta gloria, quanta sit excellentia mirari digne non possumus, cujus martyrium cum per viginti et novem annorum spatium per innumerabilia fuerit tormenta productum, tantum solus elaboravit quod alter quispiam, ubi in totis fere illis partibus pro testimonio fidei potuisset occumbere, non invenit. Si quid autem forte superfuit, discipulorum ejus successio veneranda supplevit, inter quos nimirum beatus Eleuchadius, velut aureum sidus enituit, et, juxta nominis sui etymologiam, paterni candoris atque splendoris insignia, ut revera filius reportavit. Eleuchadius quippe Graece, Latine intelligitur candidus. Nec immerito. Ex eorum nempe fuerat numero, de quibus dicitur: «Candidi facti sunt Nazaraei ejus, splendorem Deo dederunt, et sicut lac coagulati sunt (Thren. IV).» Et Jacob de Christo ad filium: «Pulchriores sunt, inquit, oculi ejus vino, et dentes ejus lacte candidiores (Gen. XLIX).» Oculi nempe Christi, apostoli et evangelistae sunt, qui universo corpori sanctae Ecclesiae lumen sapientiae praestiterunt, quorum doctrina, dum rigorem atque duritiam priscae legis emollit, quodammodo austeritatem vini veteris eorum pulchritudo praecellit, evangelica quippe praecepta mandatis Veteris Testamenti longe sunt clariora. Dentes vero sancti praedicatores sunt, qui conversos homines a pravorum societate praecidunt eosque in Christi corpus, sicut superius dictum est, quasi mandendo trajiciunt.

Nor indeed is it to be believed, my brothers, that Blessed Eleuchadius, while he yet lived, was without the labors of martyrdom, even if he was not consummated by martyrdom. For he saw that some remains of the recently extinguished paganism still survived; he grieved that in the people committed to him even the last vestiges of superstitious ritual remained, and therefore, although the hands of persecutors did not draw swords, his holy soul was tortured, burned by the fire of pious zeal and paternal compassion. For what does it profit if anyone believes catholically and lives like a pagan? Or how does right belief concord with a heretical life? For what does it help if the apostolic faith is present, where an Arian conversation is led? For concerning those who believe catholically and live heretically, the blessed Apostle complains, saying: "They confess that they know God, but by their deeds they deny Him (Tit. I)." Since whether by believing or by living, to deny God is without doubt nothing else than to perish. Wherefore the blessed pontiff Eleuchadius bore no contemptible martyrdom in the peace of the Church itself, seeing that even if not with those who believe faithlessly, he is proved to have had an irreconcilable conflict with those who live perversely; although we also gather not without reason that he labored in the doctrine of the faith, since we recognize that the cities and towns adjacent to all the Ravennese metropolis hide almost no martyrs.

Whence we cannot worthily admire how great is the glory, how great the excellence of Blessed Apollinaris, whose martyrdom, since it was prolonged through the space of twenty-nine years through innumerable torments, he alone labored so greatly that someone else, where in almost all those parts he might have been able to die for the testimony of the faith, did not find. But if anything perhaps remained, the venerable succession of his disciples supplied it, among whom certainly Blessed Eleuchadius shone forth like a golden star, and, according to the etymology of his name, he brought back the insignia of paternal brightness and splendor as a true son. For Eleuchadius in Greek is understood in Latin as candidus. And not undeservedly. For he had been of the number of those of whom it is said: "His Nazirites have been made white, they gave splendor to God, and they have been curdled like milk (Thren. IV)." And Jacob concerning Christ to his son: "His eyes," he said, "are more beautiful than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk (Gen. XLIX)." For the eyes of Christ are the apostles and evangelists, who provided the light of wisdom to the whole body of the holy Church, whose doctrine, while it softens the rigor and hardness of the ancient law, in a certain way their beauty excels the austerity of the old wine, for the evangelical precepts are far clearer than the mandates of the Old Testament. But the teeth are the holy preachers, who cut off converted men from the society of the wicked and transfer them into the body of Christ, as was said above, as if by chewing.

Porro nomine lactis doctrina legis innuitur, quae carnalem populum lactis poculo, tanquam parvulos alere videbatur, quorum nimirum lacte candidiores sunt doctores Ecclesiae, quia fortem et solidum verbi cibum et ipsi comedunt et aliis tradunt, de quibus ad Hebraeos dicit Apostolus: «Perfectorum autem est solidus cibus (Hebr. V).» Et bene candidi esse dicuntur doctores Ecclesiae, quia et a pravitatis macula liberi, et conspicuae conversationis videntur operibus clari.

Quapropter cavendum est, fratres mei, ne qua nos vitiorum nigredo dedecoret, qui candidos in Christi militia duces habemus. Periculose nimirum rerum species fluctuat, ubi cum ducibus subsequentis exercitus insignia non concordant. Beati siquidem patres nostri promptos se exhibebant ad perferenda supplicia, nos autem dum a proximo laedimur, compescamus saltem animos a vindicta. Moyses nempe ad ultionis indicium descendens de monte cornutus apparuit (Exod. XXXIV); super Dominum autem in mansuetudinis Spiritu columba descendit (Matth. III). Illi decreverunt pro Christo propria cuncta contemnere, nos autem discamus saltem quae aliena sunt, non ambire. Praesenti necessitati hodierna cura sufficiat, nec diem crastinum sollicitudinis rancor anticipet.

Israeliticus sane populus, sicut sacra testatur historia, cum manna colligeret, scaturiebat vermibus atque computrescebat, si quis infideliter agens, ex eo in crastinum reservaret (Exod. XVI). Sic nimirum quisquis ardore cupiditatis accensus, ut tanquam corpori suo alimenta provideat, terrenam sibi substantiam thezaurizat, huic ille vermis ebullit, qui conscientiam fodiat, et arcana pectoris rodat. Enimvero ii sollicitudinum vermes, quos avaritia generat, illos denuo vermes parant, de quibus scriptum est: «Ignis eorum non exstinguetur et vermis non morietur (Isa. LXVI),» ut ignem ignis cupiditatis accendat et vermis ex verme procedat. Quanquam et sic valeat non inconvenienter intelligi, quia sicut ipse Christus, qui dicit: «Ego sum vermis, et non homo (Psal. XXI),» provenit aliis in resurrectionem, ita nihilominus verbum ejus fit manna mellisque dulcedo fidelibus, infidelibus autem et prave viventibus vermis fit, non videlicet qui animam reficiens alat, sed qui conscientiam terrendo ac minitando remordeat. Sexto autem die duplex mensura colligi jubebatur, ut ex eo in Sabbatum medietas servaretur. Porro autem sexta dies, sexta mundi aetas intelligitur, in qua nunc sumus.

Furthermore, by the name of milk the doctrine of the law is hinted at, which seemed to nourish the carnal people with a cup of milk, as if little children, whose teachers of the Church are certainly whiter than milk, because they both eat the strong and solid food of the word themselves and hand it on to others, concerning whom the Apostle says to the Hebrews: "But solid food is for the perfect (Hebr. V)." And well are the doctors of the Church said to be white, because they are both free from the stain of depravity and seen to be bright in the works of conspicuous conversation.

Wherefore it is to be guarded against, my brothers, lest any blackness of vices disgrace us, who have white leaders in the militia of Christ. Certainly the appearance of things fluctuates perilously, where the insignia do not concord with the leaders of the following army. For our blessed fathers showed themselves prompt to bear punishments; but we, when we are harmed by our neighbor, let us at least restrain our minds from vengeance. For Moses, as an indication of vengeance descending from the mountain, appeared horned (Exod. XXXIV); but over the Lord in the Spirit of mildness a dove descended (Matth. III). They decreed to contemn all their own things for Christ; let us at least learn not to covet those things which are another's. Let today's care suffice for present necessity, nor let the rancor of anxiety anticipate the morrow.

The Israelite people indeed, as sacred history witnesses, when they collected manna, it swarmed with worms and putrefied, if anyone acting unfaithfully reserved any of it for the morrow (Exod. XVI). So clearly whoever, kindled by the heat of cupidity, treasures up for himself earthly substance as if providing nourishment for his body, for him that worm bubbles up which may dig into the conscience and gnaw the secrets of the breast. Truly those worms of anxieties, which avarice generates, prepare in turn those worms concerning which it is written: "Their fire shall not be extinguished and their worm shall not die (Isa. LXVI)," so that the fire of the fire of cupidity may kindle and the worm proceed from the worm. Although it may also be understood not inconveniently thus, that just as Christ Himself, who says: "I am a worm, and no man (Psal. XXI)," came to others for resurrection, so nevertheless His word becomes manna and the sweetness of honey to the faithful, but to the unfaithful and those living perversely it becomes a worm, not clearly one which may nourish by refreshing the soul, but which may bite by terrifying and threatening the conscience. But on the sixth day a double measure was ordered to be collected, so that from it a half might be kept for the Sabbath. Furthermore, the sixth day is understood as the sixth age of the world, in which we now are.

In hac ergo die duplum pro venturo Sabbato colligit qui pro gloriae coelestis intuitu, ubi perpes Sabbatum et vera est requies, verbum Dei et audit et facit. In hac duplum recondit qui et bene vivit, et aliis exemplum salutis ostendit; sive, quod expeditius est, duplicem mensuram colligit, qui tantum in bona operatione desudat, unde et hic Conditori suo ejus anima placeat, et cum eo postmodum perpetualiter vivat. Quod igitur reponebatur pro Sabbato, corrumpi non poterat, quia bona opera, quae pro desiderio supernae quietis fiunt, perpetuo permanebunt. Non ergo illae sunt cumulandae divitiae, quas aerugo demoliatur, quas tineae comedant, et quae vermium scaturigine computrescant (Luc. XII), quarum scilicet non liberos possessores beatus Jacobus increpans: «Divitiae, inquit, vestrae putrefactae sunt, vestimenta vestra a tineis comesta sunt, aurum et argentum vestrum aeruginavit, et aerugo eorum in testimonium vobis erit et ardebit carnes vestras sicut ignis (Jac. V).» Illas igitur, fratres, divitias appetamus, quae nos gemmis ac margaritis valeant adornare virtutum, quae ad coelestium nos provehant titulos dignitatum. Quas profecto divitias insinuat propheta, cum dicit: «Divitiae salutis sapientia et scientia; timor Domini ipse est thesaurus ejus (Isa. XXXIII).»

Has nimirum divitias beatus Eleuchadius concupivit, cum de cathedra se philosophicae doctrinae deposuit, cum ferulam praeceptoris abjecit, cum de magisterii principatu Christi se discipulatui humiliter subdidit. Quidquid sane illic antea superfluum didicit, in hujus scholae longe nobilioribus studiis amputavit; quidquid illic mendacii, quidquid superstitionis edocuit, in ecclesiasticae puritatis disciplina correxit. Unde per Moysen lege decernitur, ut mulieri bello captae et in conjugium victoris electae, corporis superfluitas abscindatur: «Quae radet, inquit, caesariem, et circumcidet ungues, et deponet vestem, in qua capta est, sedens in domo tua flebit patrem et matrem suam uno mense, et postea intrabis ad eam dormiesque cum illa, et erit uxor tua (Deut. XXI).» Mulieri quippe caesariem radimus, cum rationabilis disciplinae sensus superfluos amputamus. Ungues etiam circumcidimus, cum ab ea mortua quaeque superstitionum opera desecamus. Quae etiam vestem deponere, in qua est capta, praecipitur: ut superductam fabularum et quorumlibet figmentorum exuat superficiem ac solidam verae rationis exhibeat veritatem. Patrem vero et matrem deflet, quia liberalium auctores artium inter mortuos deputat et eos in errore periisse compatiendo deplorat. Consuetudo autem feminarum est per unumquemque mensem se sui sanguinis effusione purgare. Post mensem itaque ad hanc mulierem intrare praecipimur, ut artem cujuslibet disciplinae omni superstitionum contagio defaecatam veluti in conjugium sortiamur, quatenus jam Israelitica facta consequenter in Israelitae conjugium transeat et bene fecunda spiritualim operum sobolem reddat.

On this day, therefore, he collects double for the coming Sabbath who, for the sake of the intuition of heavenly glory, where there is a perpetual Sabbath and true rest, both hears and does the word of God. In this he stores up double who both lives well and shows an example of salvation to others; or, what is more expeditious, he collects a double measure who labors so greatly in good operation, whence both here his soul may please its Creator, and with Him afterwards may live perpetually. That which therefore was laid up for the Sabbath could not be corrupted, because good works, which are done for the desire of supernal rest, will remain perpetually. Therefore those riches are not to be accumulated, which rust may demolish, which moths may eat, and which may putrefy with a gushing of worms (Luc. XII), of which not free possessors Blessed James rebuking says: "Your riches are putrefied, your garments are eaten by moths, your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust shall be for a testimony to you and shall burn your flesh like fire (Jac. V)." Those riches therefore, brothers, let us seek, which may be able to adorn us with the gems and pearls of virtues, which may promote us to the titles of heavenly dignities. Which riches indeed the prophet hints at, when he says: "The riches of salvation are wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord itself is his treasure (Isa. XXXIII)."

Doubtless Blessed Eleuchadius desired these riches when he deposed himself from the chair of philosophical doctrine, when he cast away the rod of the preceptor, when he humbly subjected himself to the discipleship of Christ from the principality of mastery. Whatever superfluous thing he had previously learned there, he pruned away in the far more noble studies of this school; whatever of falsehood, whatever of superstition he taught there, he corrected in the discipline of ecclesiastical purity. Whence by the law through Moses it is decreed that for a woman captured in war and chosen for the marriage of the victor, the superfluity of the body should be cut away: "She shall shave," he said, "her hair, and pare her nails, and put off the garment in which she was captured, sitting in your house she shall weep for her father and her mother for one month, and afterwards you shall enter to her and sleep with her, and she shall be your wife (Deut. XXI)." We indeed shave the hair of the woman when we prune away the superfluous senses of rational discipline. We also pare the nails when we cut off from her any dead works of superstitions. She is also ordered to put off the garment in which she was captured: so that she may strip off the superinduced surface of fables and of any figments whatever, and exhibit the solid truth of true reason. But she weeps for her father and mother because she accounts the authors of the liberal arts among the dead and deplores with compassion that they perished in error. Now it is the custom of women to purge themselves each month by the effusion of their own blood. After a month, therefore, we are ordered to enter to this woman, so that we may obtain as if in marriage the art of any discipline whatever, purified from all contagion of superstitions, so that having now been made an Israelite she may consequently pass into the marriage of an Israelite and return a well-fecund offspring of spiritual works.

Cui etiam non dissimile est quod idem Moyses Israelitico populo aurum et argentum cum vestibus ab Aegyptiis mutuari praecepit in quo videlicet, ut non diutius immorer, mystice aurum et argentum cum vestibus ab Aegyptiis petimus, unde Domino tabernaculum fabricemus cum mundanos poetas ac philosophos legimus, ut in divinis eloquiis luculentius proficere valeamus. Sive etiam, quod perspicacius est, aurum et argentum animae sunt pretiosae, quae cum vestibus simul, id est suis corporibus, populo Dei se copulant, ut tenebrosum hoc saeculum, velut Aegyptum deserant et terram promissam perpetuae felictatis acquirant. Quod ergo beatus Eleuchadius mutuatus est ab Aegyptiis, profecit Israelitis, et thesaurum, quem gentilitati subripuit, sanctae dispensator Ecclesiae fideliter erogavit. Cujus quidem gesta non reperiuntur apicibus tradita, sed non sine causa vetustas, vel basilicam in ejus honorem construxit, vel ejus obitum annuae solemnitatis honoribus dedicavit. Nam et nonnulla super Veteri ac Novo Testamento, sive etiam de incarnatione, vel passione Domini perhibetur exarasse volumina, quae tamen scriptorum arbitramur oblivione deleta. Quanquam et hoc ad cumulum meritorum ejus pertinere non immerito videatur, quod tunc se fieri consensit episcopum, cum Ecclesiam egestas opprimeret, et rudis adhuc fidei noviterque plantatae labor difficilior immineret, cum denique ad pristini ritus pullulantia germina radicitus evellenda incumberet graveque fastigium et temporalis subsidii deesset emolumentum. Licet enim Ecclesia jam tunc fuerit in fide fundata, Christiana tamen religio necdum erat vivendi moribus expolita.

Et nos itaque, fratres charissimi, hujus sancti fervoris imitemur exemplum. Nunquam timeamus illud negotium constanter ac fiducialiter aggredi, in quo nos speremus, sive pro divinis obsequiis, sive pro salute fraterna, pressuris atque adversitatibus fatigari. Fugiatur honor, gloria, divitiae omnisque dignitas temporalis. Labor obedientiae, paupertatis angustia, et inquietudo charitatis quae nos exerceat appetatur. Redemptorem quippe nostrum plebs Judaica, cum esset satiata de panibus, regem voluit constituere, sed, testante Joanne, ne reperiri potuisset, aufugit in montem (Joan. VI). Cum autem quaereretur ad crucem, ultro se non cognoscentibus obtulit, dicens: «Quem quaeritis?» Quibus utique perhibentibus: «Jesum Nazarenum» se quaerere; illico respondit: «Ego sum (Joan. XVIII).» Quid est enim quod Mediator Dei et hominum ad regnum promovendus evasit, ad mortem vero se ultroneum quaesitus ingessit, nisi ut nos admoneret mundi hujus gloriam devitare, tribulationes autem pro Deo, et laborum dolorumque pressuras gratulanter expetere?

To which it is also not dissimilar that the same Moses ordered the Israelite people to borrow gold and silver with garments from the Egyptians, in which clearly—lest I dwell longer—we mystically ask for gold and silver with garments from the Egyptians, whence we may fabricate a tabernacle for the Lord, when we read the worldly poets and philosophers, so that we may be able to profit more clearly in the divine oracles. Or also, which is more perspicuous, the gold and silver are precious souls, which together with their garments, that is, their bodies, join themselves to the people of God, so that they may desert this dark world as if Egypt and acquire the promised land of perpetual happiness. That which therefore Blessed Eleuchadius borrowed from the Egyptians profited the Israelites, and the treasure which he snatched from paganism he faithfully distributed as a dispenser of the holy Church. Whose deeds indeed are not found handed down in writings, but not without cause has antiquity either constructed a basilica in his honor, or dedicated his death with the honors of an annual solemnity. For he is also reported to have written some volumes concerning the Old and New Testament, or even concerning the incarnation or passion of the Lord, which nevertheless we judge to have been deleted by the oblivion of writers. Although this also seems to pertain not undeservedly to the accumulation of his merits, that he then consented to be made a bishop when poverty oppressed the Church, and the more difficult labor of a faith still rude and newly planted was imminent, when finally he applied himself to radically uprooting the sprouting seeds of the pristine ritual and the heavy burden and benefit of temporal subsidy was lacking. For although the Church had then already been founded in faith, the Christian religion was not yet polished by the morals of living.

And so let us also, most beloved brothers, imitate the example of this holy fervor. Let us never fear to approach that business constantly and confidently, in which we hope to be fatigued, either for divine services or for fraternal salvation, by pressures and adversities. Let honor, glory, riches and all temporal dignity be fled. Let the labor of obedience, the narrowness of poverty, and the restlessness of charity which may exercise us be sought. Indeed the Jewish people, when they had been satiated with loaves, wished to appoint our Redeemer as king, but, as John witnesses, lest He could be found, He fled into the mountain (Joan. VI). But when He was sought for the cross, He offered Himself voluntarily to those not knowing Him, saying: "Whom do you seek?" To whom indeed as they asserted that they sought "Jesus of Nazareth," He immediately replied: "I am he (Joan. XVIII)." For why is it that the Mediator of God and men escaped when he was to be promoted to a kingdom, but sought, He thrust Himself voluntarily into death, unless so that He might admonish us to avoid the glory of this world, but gratefully to seek tribulations for God, and the pressures of labors and pains?

Paulus quoque cum esset Mileti, et omnes sibimet obsequentes seseque affectuosissime diligentes aspiceret, ita ut Lucas in Actus apostolici libro perhibeat, quia discedente Paulo magnus fletus factus est omnium, et procumbentes super collum ejus, osculabantur eum. Ipse tamen Hierosolymam passurus tanquam epulaturus avidissime festinabat, dicens: «Ecce, inquit, alligatus spiritu vado in Hierusalem, quae in ea ventura sunt mihi ignorans, nisi quod spiritus per omnes civitates protestatur mihi, dicens: Quoniam vincula, et tribulationes me manent.» «Sed nihil horum vereor, nec facio animam meam pretiosiorem quam me, dummodo consummem cursum meum et ministerium quod accepi a Domino, testificari Evangelium gratiae Dei (Act. XX).» Ecce vallatus turba flentium minime flectitur, delinitus osculis, blanditus obsequiis ad sui misericordiam non movetur, sed laetus ad vincula et tormenta festinat tanquam si ad nuptiale convivium pransurus accedat.

Nos etiam, dilectissimi, imitatorum Christi sequentes exempla, fugiamus blanditias saeculi, ad adversa quaelibet pro Deo perferenda lumbos mentis nostrae viriliter accingamus. Et qui ad haereditatem filiorum, quae est in patria, tendimus, in exsilio positi, conservorum injurias aequanimiter toleremus, quatenus supernus inspector et arbiter noster considerans nos pro suae jussionis imperio minime reluctantes, quanto nunc conspicit oppressiores in poena, tanto postmodum remuneret feliciores in gloria, Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

MARTIUS. XX. Homilia in Dominica Palmarum. XX. Sermo in vigilia S. Benedicti abbatis et confessoris. XXI. Homilia de eodem S. Benedicto abbate et confessore. XXIV. Sermo in Coena Domini. XXV. Sermo in Annuntiatione B. Mariae Virginis. XXVII. Sermo in Resurrectione Domini.

VII. HOMILIA IN DOMINICA PALMARUM. (XX MART.) «Cum appropinquasset Jesus Hierosolymis, et venisset Bethphage ad montem Oliveti, tunc misit duos de discipulis suis, dicens eis: Ite in castellum, quod contra vos est, etc. (Matth. XXI).»

Passurus sponte Dominus pro salute humana, spontaneus ad locum passionis accedit. Ad hoc venit in mundum, ad hoc natus est, ut sua passione nos liberaret. Scienter Hierosolymam venit, scienter magna populorum comitatus caterva pomposo famulatu ingreditur, ut ostenderet se mortem non timere, sed ad eam paratum esse. Si enim mortem vitare voluisset, ad locum ubi mortem suam quaerentes esse sciebat, non venisset. Unde in Evangelio dicit: «Ecce ascendimus Hierosolymam, et Filius hominis tradetur principibus sacerdotum et scribis, et condemnabunt eum morte (Matth. XX).»

Paul also, when he was at Miletus, and saw everyone following him and loving him most affectionately, such that Luke reports in the book of the Apostolic Acts that after Paul departed there was a great weeping of all, and falling upon his neck, they kissed him. He nevertheless was hastening most greedily to Jerusalem to suffer as if to feast, saying: "Behold," he said, "bound in spirit I go to Jerusalem, not knowing the things which are to come to me in it, except that the spirit protests to me through all the cities, saying: That chains and tribulations remain for me." "But I fear none of these, nor do I make my soul more precious than myself, provided that I may consummate my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord, to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God (Act. XX)." Behold, surrounded by a crowd of those weeping he is by no means bent, softened by kisses, soothed by services he is not moved to mercy for himself, but joyful he hastens to chains and torments as if he were approaching to dine at a nuptial banquet.

We also, most beloved, following the examples of the imitators of Christ, let us flee the flatteries of the world, let us manfully gird the loins of our mind to bear any adversities for God. And we who tend toward the inheritance of sons, which is in the fatherland, placed in exile, let us equanimously tolerate the injuries of our fellow-servants, so that our supernal inspector and arbiter, considering us by no means reluctant before the empire of His command, as much as He now beholds us more oppressed in punishment, so much may He afterwards remunerate us more happily in glory, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ages of ages. Amen.

MARCH. XX. Homily on Palm Sunday. XX. Sermon on the vigil of S. Benedict the abbot and confessor. XXI. Homily concerning the same S. Benedict the abbot and confessor. XXIV. Sermon on the Lord's Supper. XXV. Sermon on the Annunciation of the B. Virgin Mary. XXVII. Sermon on the resurrection of the Lord.

VII. HOMILY ON PALM SUNDAY. (MARCH XX.) "When Jesus had approached Jerusalem, and had come to Bethphage at the mount of Olives, then he sent two of his disciples, saying to them: Go into the castle which is over against you, etc. (Matth. XXI)."

The Lord, about to suffer voluntarily for human salvation, approaches the place of His passion spontaneously. To this He came into the world, for this He was born, that by His passion He might liberate us. Knowingly He came to Jerusalem, knowingly He entered accompanied by a large crowd of people with pompous service, so that He might show that He did not fear death, but was prepared for it. For if He had wished to avoid death, He would not have come to the place where he knew those seeking His death were. Whence he says in the Gospel: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death (Matth. XX)."

Sed quid est quod qui prius fugerat cum rex fieri debuisset, nunc spontaneus accedit cum crucifigendus sit? Nisi plane ut sua membra doceret mundi alta fugere, ad ea vero quae pro mundi amore humilia et abjecta putantur, cum gaudio accedere. Si enim rex factus fuisset, Judaeorum errorem confirmasset, qui eum tantum regem terrenum exspectabant. Moriendo autem mortem destruxit, et resurgendo vitam reparavit. Accedit etiam ad locum passionis super asinam et pullum sedens, ut ostenderet se amborum esse populorum Dominum, Judaeorum scilicet et Gentilium. Per asinam enim, quae sub jugo erat, populus Judaicus significatur, qui sub jugo legis erat. Per pullum asinae vero, qui nondum domitus erat, populus Gentilis significatur, qui jugum legis divinae nondum susceperat. Super utrumque sedet, quia utrumque ad fidem vocavit, et utrumque ad suae jussionis obsequium redegit.

Sed videamus cur duos de discipulis suis miserit, qui asinam et pullum adducerent. Isti duo discipuli sunt duo ordines praedicatorum, Veteris scilicet et Novi Testamenti. Illi enim Judaeis, isti Gentilibus praedicaverunt. Sive isti duo discipuli sunt duo praecepta charitatis, amor scilicet Dei et proximi. Nemo enim ad Dominum quemquam potest adducere, nisi ipse in amore Dei et proximi sit perfectus. Ite in castellum, quod contra vos est, ire jubentur. Castellum hoc mundus hic est, qui Christi discipulis est adversus. Amicitia enim hujus mundi inimica est Deo (Jac. IV). Unde mundus castellum dicitur, quia moenibus vitiorum et turribus superbiae contra Christi humilitatem munitur. In hoc castello asina et pullus ligati erant, quia et Judaicus populus et Gentilis peccatorum vinculis tenebantur. Discipuli eos solvere et ad Dominum adducere jubentur. Sancti enim praedicatores verbo praedicationis et Spiritus sancti gratia homines a peccatorum vinculis solvunt et ad Christi obsequium perducunt. Si quis autem eis aliquid dixerit, dicant: «Dominus his opus habet (Matth. XXI).» Isti qui aliquid dicunt, spiritus nequitiae sunt, qui hominum conversionem impedire conantur, variis obicibus suggerendis et mundi amorem ingerendo. Quibus nihilominus praedicatores respondent quia «Dominus his opus habet,» quia Deus vult omnes homines salvos fieri et ad agnitionem veritatis venire (I Tim. II). Unde Dominus: «Si mundus vos odit, scitote quia me priorem vobis odio habuit. Si de mundo fuissetis, mundus, quod suum erat, diligeret; quia vero de mundo non estis, sed ego elegi vos de mundo, propterea odit vos mundus (Joan. XV).»

But why is it that He who before had fled when he was to be made king, now approaches spontaneously when He is to be crucified? Unless clearly so that He might teach His members to flee the high things of the world, but to approach with joy those things which are thought by the world to be humble and abject for the sake of the love of God. For if He had been made king, He would have confirmed the error of the Jews, who were expecting Him only as an earthly king. But by dying He destroyed death, and by rising He repaired life. He also approaches the place of His passion riding upon an asina and a pullus, so that He might show that He is the Lord of both peoples, namely the Jews and the Gentiles. For by the asina, which was under the yoke, the Jewish people is signified, who were under the yoke of the law. By the pullus of the asina, however, which was not yet broken, the Gentile people is signified, who had not yet received the yoke of the divine law. He sits upon both, because He called both to the faith, and reduced both to the obedience of His command.

But let us see why He sent two of His disciples to bring the asina and the pullus. These two disciples are the two orders of preachers, namely of the Old and New Testament. For the former preached to the Jews, the latter to the Gentiles. Or these two disciples are the two precepts of charity, namely the love of God and of the neighbor. For no one can bring anyone to the Lord, unless he is himself perfect in the love of God and of the neighbor. They are ordered to go into the castle which was over against them. This castle is this world, which is opposed to the disciples of Christ. For the friendship of this world is an enemy to God (Jac. IV). Whence the world is called a castle, because it is fortified by the walls of vices and the towers of pride against the humility of Christ. In this castle the asina and the pullus were bound, because both the Jewish and the Gentile people were bound by the chains of sins. The disciples are ordered to loose them and bring them to the Lord. For the holy preachers, by the word of preaching and the grace of the Holy Spirit, loose men from the chains of sins and lead them to the obedience of Christ. But if anyone should say anything to them, they should say: "The Lord has need of them (Matth. XXI)." These who say anything are the spirits of wickedness, who try to hinder the conversion of men, by suggesting various obstacles and bringing in the love of the world. To whom nevertheless the preachers reply that "the Lord has need of them," because God wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (I Tim. II). Whence the Lord says: "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you (Joan. XV)."

Per asinam et pullum, qui erant in castello ligati, Judaeorum significatur populus et gentilis, quorum uterque peccatorum vinculis subjacebat. Asina subjugalis Judaicum populum signat jugo legis subjectum. Pullus lasciviens et effrenis Gentilem populum significat, qui propriae voluntatis lascivia ducebatur, et nullius adhuc legis jugum susceperat. Uterque tamen in castello ligatus erat, quia uterque infidelitatis errore et mundi amore tenebatur. Sed discipuli eos solvunt et ad Dominum adducunt, quia sancti praedicatores per Evangelii verbum homines ab erroribus mundi solvunt et ad Christi fidem perducunt. Ponunt etiam vestimenta sua super eos, et Dominus super eos sedet. Vestimenta discipulorum sunt exempla bonorum operum et documenta virtutum, quibus fidelium animae ornantur, ut Dominus in eis sicut in throno suo sedere valeat. Super utrumque sedet, sicut dictum est, quia de utroque populo suam Ecclesiam constituit.

Sed videamus quid agat turba, quae Dominum sequitur vel praecedit. «Plurima, inquit, turba straverunt vestimenta sua in via; alii autem caedebant ramos de arboribus et sternebant in via (Matth. XXI).» Qui vestimenta sua in via sternunt sancti martyres sunt, qui pro Christi nomine propria corpora usque ad mortem offerre non timuerunt, et quasi per proprium sanguinem viam Domino ad aliorum corda paraverunt. Qui ramos de arboribus caedunt doctores sunt Ecclesiae, qui de libris sanctarum Scripturarum quasi de frugiferis arboribus virtutum testimonia et exempla patrum decerpunt, et in via cordium fidelium sternunt, ut Dominus ad eos facilius accedere valeat. Omnes autem una voce clamant: «Hosanna filio David; benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini; hosanna in excelsis (Ibid.).» Per hunc clamorem confitentur eum esse vere Filium David secundum carnem, et Filium Dei secundum divinitatem.

Nos etiam, fratres charissimi, exempla turbarum et discipulorum sequentes, viam Domino in cordibus nostris preparemus. Sternamus vestimenta nostra, id est corpora nostra spiritui subjiciamus, ut Dominum bajulare possimus. Caedamus ramos de arboribus, id est sanctarum Scripturarum testimonia colligamus, quibus diaboli tentationibus resistere valeamus. Et clamemus magna voce, non solum verbo sed etiam opere: «Hosanna in excelsis,» id est ab eo qui solus nos salvare potest salutem petamus, Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

By the asina and the pullus, which were bound in the castle, the people of the Jews and the Gentiles are signified, both of whom were subject to the chains of sins. The asina under the yoke signifies the Jewish people subject to the yoke of the law. The pullus wanton and unbridled signifies the Gentile people, who were led by the wantonness of their own will and had not yet received the yoke of any law. Both nevertheless were bound in the castle, because both were held by the error of infidelity and the love of the world. But the disciples loose them and bring them to the Lord, because the holy preachers by the word of the Gospel loose men from the errors of the world and lead them to the faith of Christ. They also place their garments upon them, and the Lord sits upon them. The garments of the disciples are the examples of good works and the teachings of the virtues, by which the souls of the faithful are adorned, so that the Lord may be able to sit in them as in His own throne. He sits upon both, as was said, because He established His Church from both peoples.

But let us see what the crowd does, which follows or precedes the Lord. "A very large crowd," he says, "spread their garments in the way; others however cut branches from the trees and spread them in the way (Matth. XXI)." Those who spread their garments in the way are the holy martyrs, who for the name of Christ did not fear to offer their own bodies even to death, and as if through their own blood they prepared a way for the Lord to the hearts of others. Those who cut branches from the trees are the doctors of the Church, who from the books of the holy Scriptures as if from fruitful trees cut the testimonies of the virtues and the examples of the fathers, and spread them in the way of the hearts of the faithful, so that the Lord may be able to approach them more easily. All however with one voice cry out: "Hosanna to the son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest (Ibid.)." By this cry they confess that He is truly the Son of David according to the flesh, and the Son of God according to the divinity.

We also, most beloved brothers, following the examples of the crowds and the disciples, let us prepare a way for the Lord in our hearts. Let us spread our garments, that is, let us subject our bodies to the spirit, so that we may be able to bear the Lord. Let us cut branches from the trees, that is, let us collect the testimonies of the holy Scriptures, by which we may be able to resist the temptations of the devil. And let us cry out with a loud voice, not only by word but also by work: "Hosanna in the highest," that is, let us ask for salvation from Him who alone can save us, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ages of ages. Amen.

VIII. SERMO IN VIGILIA SANCTI BENEDICTI ABBATIS. (XX MART.)

Praestitit nobis Dominus, fratres charissimi, sanctissimi patris Benedicti festivitatem celebrare; nimirum, ut compatiamur aegritudinem patienti collaetemur autem coelos feliciter ascendenti. Prius namque per temporalem obitum naturae debitum solvit; deinde comitantibus hymnidicis angelorum coetibus ad coelestia regna migravit.

In vigiliis quippe debet celebrator affligi, ut in solemnitate valeat gratulari. Nunc itaque illius ultimae resurrectionis, veri scilicet Paschae, vigilias colimus, si voluntates proprias frangamus, si carnis impetum refrenemus, si cogitationes pravas a corde repellamus, crucem post Jesum, nosmetipsos affligendo, corde bajulemus, si denique studeamus offendentibus parcere, indigentibus subvenire, veritatem ore proferre, charitatem non fictam in corde servare: si non vacemus fabulis, non verbis intendamus otiosis, non terrena quaelibet concupiscamus, non negotiis saecularibus nos implicemus; si puras et quotidie Deo mundas studeamus orationes offerre, si verbum Dei toto cordis affectu jugiter delectet audire ut Christus audiatur in lingua, Christus videatur in vita, Christus in corde, Christus in voce. Enimvero quisquis haec diligenter observat, ille veraciter aeternae festivitatis vigilias celebrat. Et qui modo cum Christo sese humiliando mortificat, cum eo simul necesse est, consumpta prorsus omni corruptione, resurgat.

Has igitur, fratres charissimi, semper vigilias celebremus; ad capessendam illius aeternae felicitatis gloriam tota spiritus intentio dirigatur, quatenus, duae hujusmodi peragendo vigilias, Jesum semper aspicimus in cruce pendentem, eumdem postmodum inter ipsa contemplari solemnia mereamur in paternae gloriae majestate regnantem. Qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

IX. HOMILIA AD HONOREM ET LAUDEM S. BENEDICTI BABATIS ET CONFESSORIS. (XXI MART.)

Dixit Simon Petrus ad Jesum: Ecce nos reliquimus omnia et secuti sumus te, etc. (Matth. XIX).

VIII. SERMON ON THE VIGIL OF SAINT BENEDICT THE ABBOT. (MARCH XX.) "The Lord has granted to us, most beloved brothers, to celebrate the festive day of the most holy father Benedict; namely, that we may suffer with him when he is enduring sickness, but rejoice with him when he is happily ascending the heavens." For first through a temporal death he paid the debt of nature; then, accompanied by hymn-singing companies of angels, he migrated to the heavenly kingdoms.

In the vigils, the celebrant ought to be afflicted, so that on the solemnity he may be able to rejoice. And now, therefore, we celebrate the vigils of that final resurrection—the true Passover, to be sure—if we break our own wills, if we restrain the impulse of the flesh, if we repel wicked thoughts from the heart, if we bear the cross after Jesus by afflicting ourselves in the heart, and finally if we strive to spare those who offend us, to help the needy, to bring forth the truth with the mouth, and to keep unfeigned charity in the heart: if we do not devote ourselves to fables, if we do not attend to idle words, if we do not desire any earthly things, and if we do not entangle ourselves in secular business; if we strive to offer pure and daily clean prayers to God, and if it continually delights us to hear the word of God with all the affection of the heart, so that Christ may be heard in the tongue, Christ seen in the life, Christ in the heart, and Christ in the voice. For truly, whoever diligently observes these things, he truly celebrates the vigils of the eternal festivity. And he who now mortifies himself by humbling himself with Christ, it is necessary that he rise together with Him, after all corruption has been utterly consumed.

Therefore, most beloved brothers, let us always celebrate these vigils; let the whole intention of the spirit be directed toward attaining the glory of that eternal happiness, so that, by performing vigils of this kind, we always behold Jesus hanging on the cross, and afterward we may deserve to contemplate Him amidst those very solemnities reigning in the majesty of His Father's glory. Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for all ages of ages. Amen.

IX. HOMILY IN HONOR AND PRAISE OF ST. BENEDICT THE ABBOT AND CONFESSOR. (MARCH XXI.)

Simon Peter said to Jesus: Behold, we have left all things and followed you, etc. (Matth. XIX).

In hujus patris nostri praecipua solemnitate totis esset viribus incumbendum, nisi nobilis lingua Gregorii totum ejus itinerarium sermone magnifico collegisset (l. I Dial. per totum). Ita enim actus ejus, et vitam undantis eloquii claritate depinxit, ut et stylus sententiarum majestate scintillet, et sententiae stylo reluceant clariori. Ex abundanti igitur est, post vocem tanti viri aliquid addere, in cujus comparatione nos non solum ineloquentes, sed et mutos esse non ignoramus. Hoc tamen solum dixisse sufficiat, quia solus iste militarem manum excelso Principi caeteris abundantius praesentabit, et monachorum turmis, angelorum more viventibus, coelorum adimplebit palatia. Quam igitur refulgens et splendidus miles astabit imperatorio tribunali, plenus infinitis virtutibus, agminibus innumeris comitatus, consiliarius regis, judicis amicus, unicus hostis antiqui!

De eo plane, eumque sequentibus dixit Simon Petrus ad Jesum: «Ecce nos reliquimus omnia (Matth. XIX).» Amica prorsus confabulatio Simonis ad Jesum, et sermo omni oratorio flore venustior; dignusque Simon qui cum Salvatore plenius proloquatur; Simon namque obediens, Jesus salvator. Loquitur ergo obedientia cum salute, quia solis obedientibus aeterna salus haereditario jure debetur, si tamen ibi sit Petrus, id est, si obedientia non vacillet, aut titubet, sed fundata sit supra firmam petram. Et quid ait? «Ecce nos reliquimus omnia et secuti sumus te.» Solemne verbum, magna promissio, opus sanctum, dignum benedictione, relinquere omnia et sequi Christum. Haec sunt verba voluntariae persuasoria paupertatis, quae monasteria genuerunt, quae claustra monachis, anachoretis silvas copiosius repleverunt. Haec enim sunt de quibus psallit Ecclesia: «Propter verba labiorum tuorum ego custodivi vias duras (Psal. XVI).» Perceptura requiem pro labore, pro paupertate divitias, pro tribulatione mercedem. Magnum revera est relinquere omnia, sed majus Christum sequi, cum multos omnia reliquisse, nec Christum secutos fuisse legamus. Hoc opus, hic labor est, hic salutis humanae summa consistit; nec Christum possumus sequi, nisi omnia relinquamus, quia exsultat ut gigas ad currendam viam (Psal. XVIII), et oneratus eum sequi non potest. Nemo cum sarcinis enatat, ait ille disciplinae saecularis orator quem linguae nobilitas et profunditas sensus paupertatis amicum constituit. Merito relinquit omnia qui sequitur eum, qui est super omnia, quoniam sufficientia nostra ex eo est (II Cor. III), et erit Deus omnia in omnibus (Col. III).

On this principal solemnity of our father, we should have applied ourselves with all our strength, had not the noble tongue of Gregory collected his entire itinerary in a magnificent discourse (l. I Dial. throughout). For he so depicted his deeds and life with the clarity of a flowing eloquence, that both the style sparkles with the majesty of the sentences, and the sentences shine back with a clearer style. It is therefore superfluous to add anything after the voice of such a great man, in comparison with whom we know ourselves to be not only uneloquent, but even mute. Let it suffice, however, to have said only this, that he alone will present a military band to the exalted Prince more abundantly than others, and with troops of monks living in the manner of angels, he will fill the palaces of the heavens. How shining and splendid a soldier, therefore, will he stand at the imperial tribunal, full of infinite virtues, accompanied by innumerable hosts, a counselor of the king, a friend of the judge, and the singular enemy of the ancient foe!

Concerning him plainly, and those following him, Simon Peter said to Jesus: "Behold, we have left all things (Matth. XIX)." Truly a friendly conversation of Simon to Jesus, and a discourse more graceful than any oratorical flower; and Simon is worthy to speak more fully with the Savior; for Simon means obedient, and Jesus means savior. Obedience, therefore, speaks with salvation, because eternal salvation is owed by hereditary right to the obedient alone, provided that Peter is there, that is, if obedience does not waver or stumble, but is founded upon a firm rock. And what does he say? "Behold, we have left all things and followed you." A solemn word, a great promise, a holy work, worthy of blessing, to leave all things and follow Christ. These are the words of a voluntary, persuasive poverty, which brought forth monasteries, which more abundantly filled cloisters with monks and forests with anchorites. For these are the things of which the Church sings: "Because of the words of your lips I have kept hard ways (Psal. XVI)." She is about to receive rest for labor, riches for poverty, a reward for tribulation. It is truly a great thing to leave all things, but greater to follow Christ, since we read that many left all things, yet did not follow Christ. This is the task, this is the labor, here consists the summit of human salvation; nor can we follow Christ unless we leave all things, because He exults as a giant to run the way (Psal. XVIII), and one who is burdened cannot follow Him. No one swims out with bundles, says that orator of secular discipline whom nobility of tongue and depth of sense established as a friend of poverty. He rightly leaves all things who follows Him who is above all things, since our sufficiency is from Him (II Cor. III), and God will be all in all (Col. III).

Ecce, inquit, nos reliquimus omnia, non solum facultates mundi, sed et animi quoque cupiditates: neque enim relinquit omnia, qui retinuit vel seipsum; imo vero nihil prodest sine seipso caetera reliquisse, quandoquidem nullum aliud onus est gravius homini quam homo ipse. Quis enim tyrannus crudelior, quae saevior potestas homini quam hominis ipsius voluntas? Nunquam sub ea requiescere, nunquam sedere licet, et quo amplius te ad obediendum sibi noverit fatigari, eo magis urget, instigat et onerat pietatis immemor, misericordiam nesciens. Hoc enim proprium propria voluntas habet, ut quo obediens obedientior fuerit sibi, eo amplius eum crudelioribus vinculis internectat. Sola diligitur, cum sola digna sit odio, principium iniquitatis, mortis infusio, destructio magna virtutum. «Venite ergo, qui laboratis et onerati estis,» ad onerum levatorem, et ei voce et opere respondete: «Ecce nos reliquimus omnia, et secuti sumus te (Matth. XI).» Attende, quia olim, priusquam Verbum caro fieret, et habitaret in nobis (Joan. I), sequebantur Patres antiqui temporis Deum, soli spiritui solo spiritu adhaerentes. Nunc vero sequendus etiam corpore est, adeo ut, cum praedicti Patres terrenis legantur abundasse divitiis, de caetero nisi quis renuntiaverit omnibus quae possidet non possit esse discipulus ejus (Luc. XIV), qui, cum dives esset, pro nobis factus est pauper (II Cor. VIII). Relinquendae igitur sunt possessiones, et propriae voluntates, si volumus illum sequi qui non habuit ubi caput suum reclinaret (Luc. IX), et qui non venit facere voluntatem suam, sed ejus qui misit illum (Joan VI).

Sequitur: «Quid ergo erit nobis?» Jam omnia reliquit Petrus, jam non solum sequitur, sed et diu secutus est; et nunc primum interrogat quidnam sit accepturus. Quid est, Petre? Nonne obedientiam promisisti in auris auditione, non in pacti conventione? Sed audite jam quid loquatur Dominus Deus, et attendite spem in qua mundo fluctuante sperare debemus: «Amen dico vobis quod vos, qui reliquistis omnia et secuti estis me, in regeneratione, cum sederit filius hominis in sede majestatis suae, sedebitis et vos judicantes (Matth. XIX).» Infinita prorsus dulcedo miserationum Domini circa pauperes suos; nec illos relinquit in morte, pro quibus morti seipsum exposuit et tormentis. «Vos, inquit, qui secuti estis me, in regeneratione, cum sederit Filius hominis in sede majestatis suae, sedebitis et vos judicantes.» Quid est hoc aliud dicere, nisi consequemini quem sequimini, si tamen persequimini, sicut scriptum est: «Inquire pacem, et persequere eam?» (Psal. XXXIII). Sic ergo currite ut comprehendatis (I Cor. IX), nec prius residere velitis quam sedentem apprehendatis et mereamini consedere. Exsultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam (Psal. XVIII); toto utique tempore quo in terris visus est et cum hominibus conversatus (Baruch. III); nec resedit, donec ad eum perveniret quem ipse constituit laboris et tristitiae finem, «tristis est, inquiens, anima mea usque ad mortem (Matth. XXVI).»

Behold, he says, we have left all things, not only the resources of the world, but also the desires of the soul: for he does not leave all things who has retained even himself; rather, it profits nothing to have left other things without oneself, since no other burden is heavier to a man than the man himself. For what tyrant is more cruel, what power more savage to a man than the man's own will? It is never permitted to rest under it, never to sit, and the more it knows you to be fatigued in obeying it, the more it urges, instigates, and burdens, unmindful of piety, knowing no mercy. For own-will has this characteristic, that the more obedient the one obeying it has been, the more it binds him in more cruel chains. It alone is loved, when it alone is worthy of hatred, the beginning of iniquity, the infusion of death, the great destruction of the virtues. "Come therefore, you who labor and are burdened," to the lifter of burdens, and respond to Him in voice and work: "Behold, we have left all things, and followed you (Matth. XI)." Observe that formerly, before the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (Joan. I), the Fathers of ancient time followed God, adhering to the spirit alone by the spirit alone. But now He is to be followed also in the body, so much so that, while the aforesaid Fathers are read to have abounded in earthly riches, henceforth unless one renounces all that he possesses, he cannot be His disciple (Luc. XIV), who, though He was rich, for our sake became poor (II Cor. VIII). Therefore possessions must be left, and own-wills, if we wish to follow Him who had not where to lay His head (Luc. IX), and who came not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him (Joan VI).

There follows: "What then will there be for us?" Already Peter has left all things, already he not only follows, but has followed for a long time; and now for the first time he asks what he is to receive. What is it, Peter? Did you not promise obedience in the hearing of the ear, not in the making of a pact? But hear now what the Lord God says, and attend to the hope in which we ought to hope while the world fluctuates: "Amen I say to you, that you who have left all things and followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of His majesty, you also shall sit judging (Matth. XIX)." Truly infinite is the sweetness of the Lord's mercies toward His poor ones; nor does He leave them in death, for whom He exposed Himself to death and torments. "You," He says, "who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of His majesty, you also shall sit judging." What is this other than to say, you shall attain Him whom you follow, if however you pursue Him, as it is written: "Seek peace, and pursue it (Psal. XXXIII)?" So run, therefore, that you may apprehend (I Cor. IX), nor should you wish to rest before you apprehend Him who is sitting and deserve to sit together with Him. He exulted as a giant to run the way (Psal. XVIII); surely in the whole time in which He was seen on the earth and conversed with men (Baruch. III); nor did He rest, until He reached that which He Himself established as the end of labor and sorrow, saying, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death (Matth. XXVI)."

Ergo cum sederit filius hominis in sede majestatis, qui prius stetit in ignominiosissimo supplicio crucis interrogatus contumeliis pariter et tormento, sedebitis et vos judicantes, a quibus nunc judicium incipit, qui minime datis requiem vobis ipsis, cur et ille non judicare, sed judicari, nec ministrari venit, sed ministrare? (Matth. XX.) Illic vere sedebunt sedes in judicio (Psal. CXXI). Filius enim Dei Salvator indivisibili naturarum unitate, secundum quod Deus est, sedet a dextris Dei (Psal. CIX); secundum quod homo, assistit nunc vultui Dei pro nobis (Hebr. IX); nec erit ei sessio triumphalis, donec sit Deus omnia in omnibus, id est, corpus capiti tanta pace jungatur ut simus ei similes, etsi non pares. Adhuc enim negatur a Judaeis, a gentibus subsannatur, laceratur ab haereticis, a falsis Christianis graviter impugnatur; et tu eum putas residere quietum, nec attendere superborum oculos, malignantium impetus, repugnantium voluntates? Sed in regeneratione sedebit cum sedentibus, cum nos in sincerissimum nitorem in utraque substantia repurgabimur, et ipse, devictis inimicis, cum amicis intrabit in gloriam. Angelos hominibus unitate sempiterna couniens, et damna beatae resarciens civitatis. Hoc autem totum erit in regeneratione. Beata ista regeneratio, quae terram renovabit et coelum, terrigenas coelicolis foederabit, et perpetuae pacis fontem indefessa profluxione refundet.

Notandum autem quod una est generatio et duae regenerationes. Et in generatione quidem, quam ex radice vitiata contrahimus, corpus mortalitate, anima autem iniquitate repletur. In regeneratione vero baptismatis, ubi nos oportet nasci denuo (Joan. III), animae quidem purgatur iniquitas, sed corporis mortalitas non aufertur. Necessaria est ergo alia regeneratio, sive resurrectio, in qua reperientur etiam corpora configurata corpori claritatis Christi (Phil. III), si tamen corda prius fuerint reformata ad mansuetudinem et humilitatem cordis ipsius Christi. Unde et beatus, qui habet partem in resurrectione prima (Apoc. XX), pro eo utique quoniam futurus est particeps et secundae. In hac ergo regeneratione cum sederit filius hominis, etc.

Hoc est quod alio in loco Scriptura loquens, «pro confusione, inquit, duplici et rubore laudabunt partem suam (Isa. LXI).» Duo enim habet paupertas sequentium Dominum, afflictionem videlicet et vilitatem. Unde Propheta: «Vide, inquit, humilitatem meam et laborem meum (Psal. XXIV).» Propterea igitur in terra sua duplicia possidebunt (Isa. LXI), ut pro vilitate sit honor judiciariae potestatis, pro afflictione refrigerium placidissimae sessionis. Quando igitur sedebimus nos, quorum modo nec corpus, nec anima sedet, in quibus sedatum nihil, nihil quietum, nihil in eodem statu permanet?

Therefore when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of majesty, who formerly stood in the most ignominious punishment of the cross questioned by insults and likewise by torment, you also shall sit judging, from whom now judgment begins, who give very little rest to yourselves; why did even He come not to judge, but to be judged, nor to be served, but to serve (Matth. XX)? There truly shall seats sit in judgment (Psal. CXXI). For the Son of God the Savior, by an indivisible unity of natures, according to that which He is as God, sits at the right hand of God (Psal. CIX); according to that which He is as man, He now assists before the face of God for us (Hebr. IX); nor will there be a triumphal session for Him, until God is all in all, that is, the body is joined to the head with such peace that we are similar to Him, even if not equal. For He is still denied by the Jews, mocked by the Gentiles, torn by the heretics, and gravely impugned by false Christians; and do you think He is resting quietly, and does not attend to the eyes of the proud, the impulses of the malignant, the wills of those who resist? But in the regeneration He will sit with those who sit, when we shall be cleansed into the purest brightness in both substances, and He Himself, with His enemies conquered, will enter into glory with His friends. Joining angels to men in everlasting unity, and repairing the losses of the blessed city. Moreover, this whole thing will be in the regeneration. Blessed is that regeneration, which will renew the earth and the heaven, will ally the earth-born with the heaven-dwellers, and will pour back the fountain of perpetual peace with untiring profluency.

It is to be noted, however, that there is one generation and two regenerations. And in the generation indeed, which we contract from a corrupted root, the body is filled with mortality, but the soul with iniquity. In the regeneration of baptism, however, where it behooves us to be born again (Joan. III), the iniquity of the soul is indeed purged, but the mortality of the body is not taken away. Therefore another regeneration is necessary, or resurrection, in which even bodies shall be found configured to the body of the brightness of Christ (Phil. III), provided that the hearts have first been reformed to the meekness and humility of the heart of Christ Himself. Whence he also is blessed who has part in the first resurrection (Apoc. XX), for the reason surely that he is to be a partaker also of the second. In this regeneration, therefore, when the Son of Man shall sit, etc.

This is what the Scripture says in another place: "for their double confusion," it says, "and shame they shall praise their part (Isa. LXI)." For the poverty of those following the Lord has two things: namely, affliction and vileness. Whence the Prophet says: "See," he says, "my humility and my labor (Psal. XXIV)." For that reason, therefore, they shall possess double things in their land (Isa. LXI), so that for vileness there may be the honor of judicial power, and for affliction the refreshment of a most placid session. When, therefore, shall we sit, whose body now sits not, nor the soul, in whom nothing is settled, nothing quiet, nothing remains in the same state?

Quando liberabimur ab inquietudine mobilitatis hujus? Corpus enim nostrum sedere non permittitur, cum illud impediat et praesentis sensus doloris et futura mortis anxietas, quoniam passibile est et mortale. Sed et spiritus ipse nullam habet requiem ob exspectationem spei et timoris sollicitudinem. Erit autem cum anima requiescet in spe singulariter constituta (Psal. IV); libera quidem a sollicitudine, sed non ab exspectatione. Fiet autem hoc post mortem carnis, sed ante diem judicii. In die autem illa cum sederit filius hominis, perfecte et ex omni parte sedebimus, quia nec corpus doloris sensu turbabitur, nec anxiabitur timore mortis, impassibilitatis et immortalitatis duplici stola glorificatum liberique erimus, quod ad animam pertinet, ab exspectatione et sollicitudine universa, nihil minus habentes, nihil deinceps periculi metuentes, in perfectissima securitate et securissima perfectione. «Sedebitis,» ait Dominus, ait Veritas. Solemnis sessio, grata quies, plena sufficientia. «Filii hominum, usquequo gravi corde, ut quid diligitis vanitatem et quaeritis mendacium?» (Psal. IV.) Gloriam enim, quae ab invicem est, quaeritis, vanam utique et mendacem, quoniam vani filii hominum, mendaces filii hominum (Psal. LXI), et gloriam, quae a solo Deo est, non vultis, gloriam sine dubio manentem et veram. Miseri et miserabiles, qui pro brevi voluptate torrentem perditis voluptatis, et divinam vobis interrumpitis misericordiam, ut nunquam satiemini ab uberibus consolationis ejus (Psal. XXXV).

Sed ne magnae promissionis dulcedinem longanimis exspectatio contorqueret, mentis nostrae mobilitatem sermone temperat dulciori. Novit enim ipse figmentum nostrum (Psal. CII), quoniam dilationis moras pusillanimitas nostra non sustinet; ideoque benignitate sua huic quoque obviat cogitationi, et occurrit etiam ex hac parte, dicens: «Et omnis, qui reliquerit domum, aut patrem, aut matrem, aut fratrem, aut uxorem, aut agros, aut filios propter nomen meum, centuplum accipiet, et vitam aeternam possidebit (Matth. XIX).» «Obstructum est certe os loquentium iniqua (Psal. LXII).» Jamque confundantur omnes iniqua agentes supervacue (Psal. XXIV). Habemus enim promissionem vitae hujus, quae nunc est, pariter et futurae (I Tim. IV), manifestumque est praesentis temporis esse centupli promissionem ex eo nimirum quod sequitur: «Et vitam aeternam possidebit.» Sed ne quis obstinatis dissimulandi locus remaneat, vado ad Evangelium secundum Marcum, ubi aperte declaratur temporis hujus esse centupli promissionem.

When shall we be freed from the restlessness of this mobility? For our body is not permitted to sit, since both the present sense of pain and the future anxiety of death hinder it, because it is passible and mortal. But the spirit itself also has no rest because of the expectation of hope and the solicitude of fear. But it will be when the soul shall rest uniquely established in hope (Psal. IV); free indeed from solicitude, but not from expectation. This will happen after the death of the flesh, but before the day of judgment. On that day, however, when the Son of Man shall sit, we shall sit perfectly and in every part, because the body will neither be disturbed by the sense of pain, nor will it be anxious with the fear of death, glorified by the double robe of impassibility and immortality; and we shall be free, as pertains to the soul, from all expectation and solicitude, having nothing less, fearing nothing of danger henceforth, in the most perfect security and most secure perfection. "You shall sit," says the Lord, says the Truth. A solemn session, a grateful rest, a full sufficiency. "O sons of men, how long with a heavy heart, why do you love vanity and seek a lie (Psal. IV)?" For you seek the glory which is from one another, vain surely and lying, since the sons of men are vain, the sons of men are liars (Psal. LXI), and you do not wish for the glory which is from God alone, a glory without doubt remaining and true. Wretched and miserable are they who for a brief pleasure lose the torrent of pleasure, and interrupt the divine mercy for themselves, so that they may never be satisfied by the breasts of His consolation (Psal. XXXV).

But lest the long-awaited expectation should twist the sweetness of the great promise, He tempers the mobility of our mind with a sweeter discourse. For He Himself knows our frame (Psal. CII), since our faint-heartedness does not sustain the delays of postponement; and therefore by His kindness He meets this thought as well, and comes to meet us also from this side, saying: "And everyone who has left house, or father, or mother, or brother, or wife, or fields, or children for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess eternal life (Matth. XIX)." "The mouth of those speaking iniquitous things is surely stopped (Psal. LXII)." And let all those who act iniquitously in vain now be confounded (Psal. XXIV). For we have the promise of this life, which now is, as well as of the future (I Tim. IV), and it is manifest that the promise of the hundredfold belongs to the present time from that which surely follows: "And he shall possess eternal life." But lest any place for obstinate pretending remain, I go to the Gospel according to Mark, where it is openly declared that the promise of the hundredfold belongs to this time.

Ait enim Dominus: «Nemo est, qui reliquerit patrem, aut matrem, aut filios, aut agros propter me et propter Evangelium, qui non accipiat centies tantum; nunc in hoc tempore domos, et fratres,» etc. (Marc. X). Et, ut magis miremini, nec promissionem hanc, licet hujus sit temporis, exhiberi de temporalibus aestimetis, additum est: cum persecutionibus. Quid enim in persecutione positi terrenae substantiae sancti martyres acceperunt, quando et ipsa quoque terra beatorum corporum data est in manus hominum impiorum? Quod ergo dicit centies tantum domos, aut fratres, etc., minime secundum carnem intelligi posse, vel ex eo manifestum est quod centum matres accipit nemo. Jam vero, si pro communicatione possessionum et animorum affectione, quae inter electos est, promissionem hanc volumus intelligere, aliquibus quidem, sed non omnibus poterit convenire. Nonnullos enim sanctorum terrena hac et humana consolatione novimus caruisse. In corde ergo et in homine interiori centuplum istud quaeras necesse est, ut habeas nunc quidem fructum tuum in sanctificationem, finem vero vitam aeternam.

Qui ergo nondum centuplum acceperunt, scrutentur corda sua, et universa manuum suarum studia diligenter examinent, nec dubium quin inveniant angulum et diversorium, quod Salvator non novit. Sed vulpes foveas habent, et volucres coeli nidos (Luc. IX). Magis autem perfectius relinquant omnia, non quaerant quae sua sunt, nihil sibi retineant, nihil aliis. Sunt enim plerique qui, licet propriam exaltationem voluptatemque satis despiciant, propinquis tamen suis quodammodo retinent quod debuerant reliquisse, incongrua sollicitudine et religioni contraria pro eis utique laborantes. Quanti enim monachorum, dum parentibus suis plus justo consulunt, suas animas perdiderunt? Ergo relinquant omnia, solum sequantur Christum, soli Christo placere contendant, et beneplacito voluntatis ejus pervigili adhaereant sollicitudine, haud dubium quin experiantur illico quod relinquentibus omnia et sequentibus se Veritas pollicetur: «Centuplum, inquit, accipiet et vitam aeternam possidebit (Matth. XIX).» Illud enim in via accipitur ad solatium; illa vero ad beatitudinem in patria possidebitur in aeternum. Sed quid est centuplum istud, nisi consolationes, visitationesque et primitiae spiritus, qui super mel dulcis est, nisi testimonium conscientiae nostrae, nisi laeta, et jucundissima justorum exspectatio, nisi memoria abundantiae suavitatis Dei, et magna vere multitudo dulcedinis ejus, quam nec expertis, necesse est dicere, nec inerpertis [inexpertus] illis verbis exprimere quisquam potest? Non pater, non mater, non domus, non ager, non cibus, aut vestis, non denique terrenum aliquid, aut corporale, sed plane his omnibus delectabilius, super haec omnia dulcius atque jucundius est.

For the Lord says: "There is no one who has left father, or mother, or children, or fields for me and for the Gospel, who does not receive a hundred times as much; now in this time houses, and brothers," etc. (Marc. X). And, that you may wonder more, nor should you estimate this promise, although it is of this time, to be exhibited concerning temporal things, it is added: with persecutions. For what did the holy martyrs, placed in persecution, receive of earthly substance, when even the very earth of their blessed bodies was given into the hands of impious men? That he says, therefore, a hundred times as much houses, or brothers, etc., can by no means be understood according to the flesh, as is manifest even from this, that no one receives a hundred mothers. Now indeed, if for the communication of possessions and the affection of minds which is among the elect, we wish to understand this promise, it will be able to apply to some, but not to all. For we know that some of the saints have lacked this earthly and human consolation. In the heart, therefore, and in the inner man you must seek that hundredfold, so that you may have now indeed your fruit unto sanctification, but the end eternal life.

Therefore let those who have not yet received the hundredfold search their hearts, and diligently examine all the pursuits of their hands, nor is it doubtful but that they will find a corner and an inn which the Savior does not know. But foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven have nests (Luc. IX). Rather, let them more perfectly leave all things, let them not seek the things that are their own, let them retain nothing for themselves, nothing for others. For there are very many who, although they sufficiently despise their own exaltation and pleasure, nevertheless in a certain way retain for their kinsmen what they ought to have left, laboring for them surely with an incongruous solicitude and one contrary to religion. For how many monks, while they consult more than is just for their parents, have lost their own souls? Therefore let them leave all things, let them follow Christ alone, let them contend to please Christ alone, and let them adhere to the good pleasure of His will with watchful solicitude; there is no doubt but that they will experience immediately what the Truth promises to those leaving all things and following Him: "He shall receive a hundredfold," He says, "and shall possess eternal life (Matth. XIX)." For that is received on the way for solace; but the other shall be possessed forever for beatitude in the fatherland. But what is this hundredfold, if not the consolations, and visitations, and firstfruits of the spirit, which is sweeter than honey, if not the testimony of our conscience, if not the joyful and most pleasant expectation of the just, if not the memory of the abundance of the sweetness of God, and the truly great multitude of His sweetness, which, as is necessary to say, no one who has experienced it can express in those words, nor anyone who has not experienced it? Not father, not mother, not house, not field, not food, or clothing, not finally anything earthly or corporeal, but clearly it is more delightful than all these, sweeter and more pleasant above all these.

Cui vero sic specialiter totus evangelicae lectionis excursus assignari potest, quemadmodum patri et magistro nostro beato Benedicto? Hic a pueritia mundum cum flore reliquit, et currentem Christum cursu rapidissimo secutus est, nec destitit, donec consequeretur. Quis inter judicantes sublimius judicabit? Quis ita centuplum in hac vita percepit? Quis vitam aeternam gloriosius possidebit? Ejus igitur intercessione suae gratiae largitatem ad praesentis vitae consolationem et aeternae possessionem, nobis administrare dignetur, qui venit, ut vitam habeamus, et ut abundantius habeamus (Joan. X), Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui est benedictus in saecula. Amen.

Sermo X.

IN COENA DOMINI. (XXIV MART.)

Hodie, fratres charissimi, dum coenae Dominicae solemnia celebramus, plurima virtutum coelestium sacramenta recolimus. Hodie namque Salvator noster, qui caput est angelorum, dum suis discipulis vestigia tersit, verae nobis humilitatis exemplum manifeste proposuit, ut quod impendit Dominus famulis, servi non dedignentur exhibere conservis, et pulvis non deneget pulveri, quod sibi congruere tantae visum est majestati. Ubi cum Petrus obsequium suscipere summi [tanti] Praeceptoris abnueret, et ille minas repulsionis, nisi se lavari permitteret, intentaret tremefactus tandem et insistentis imperio protinus acquiescens ait: «Domine, non tantum pedes meos, sed et manus et caput (Joan. XIII).» In quibus utique verbis beatus Apostolus opera nostra, simul et cogitationes, ut a Domino purificentur atque mundentur, indigere signavit. Siquidem manibus operatur, cogitationes autem ex mente, quae caput est interioris hominis, proferuntur. Vera ergo ac perfecta purgatio est cum Deus omnipotens non solum opera nostra munda et immaculata custodit, sed etiam pravas cogitationes a cordibus nostris sancti Spiritus infusione repellit.

Hodie Salvator terreni panis ac vini speciem in sui corporis et sanguinis sacramenta convertit, suisque discipulis vitalis alimoniae pabulum ministravit. Cibus enim ille vetitus, quem primus homo intumescente superbia et gula pruriente percepit, per universa ejus viscera vitiorum omnium ac mortalis corruptionis venena diffudit. Contra hoc igitur lethale virus antidotum a Christiano populo sumitur, per quod spiritualis morbi pestilentia salubriter evomatur. Hujus novi sacramenti virtute fermentum, illud [illico] condemnatae vetustatis expellimus, ut de servitute ad libertatem spiritus et ad nova regenerationis azyma transeamus.

To whom indeed can the whole course of the evangelical lesson be so specially assigned as to our father and teacher blessed Benedict? He left the world with its flower from boyhood, and followed the running Christ with a most rapid course, nor did he cease until he should attain Him. Who among those judging will judge more sublimely? Who so perceived the hundredfold in this life? Who will possess eternal life more gloriously? By his intercession, therefore, may He deign to administer to us the largess of His grace for the consolation of the present life and the possession of the eternal, He who came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly (Joan. X), Jesus Christ our Lord, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Sermon X.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER. (MARCH XXIV.)

Today, most beloved brothers, while we celebrate the solemnities of the Lord's Supper, we recall many sacraments of the heavenly virtues. For today our Savior, who is the head of the angels, while He wiped the feet of His disciples, manifestly proposed to us an example of true humility, so that what the Lord bestowed upon His servants, the servants may not disdain to exhibit to their fellow-servants, and dust may not deny to dust what seemed to so great a majesty to be fitting for Himself. Where when Peter refused to receive the service of so great a Teacher, and He threatened the threats of rejection unless he permitted himself to be washed, at length terrified and immediately acquiescing to the command of the one insisting, he said: "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head (Joan. XIII)." In which words surely the blessed Apostle signified that our works, together with our thoughts, need to be purified and cleansed by the Lord. Since indeed one works with the hands, but thoughts are brought forth from the mind, which is the head of the inner man. Therefore it is true and perfect purgation when almighty God not only keeps our works clean and immaculate, but also repels wicked thoughts from our hearts by the infusion of the Holy Spirit.

Today the Savior converted the species of earthly bread and wine into the sacraments of His body and blood, and administered the food of vital nourishment to His disciples. For that forbidden food, which the first man received with swelling pride and an itching throat, diffused through all his viscera the poisons of all vices and of mortal corruption. Against this lethal virus, therefore, an antidote is taken by the Christian people, through which the pestilence of spiritual disease may be healthfully vomited out. By the power of this new sacrament, we immediately expel that leaven of condemned antiquity, so that we may pass from servitude to the liberty of the spirit and to the new unleavened bread of regeneration.

Hodie sacrum chrisma conficitur, per quod in nobis omnium coelestium charismatum sanctificatio confirmatur [designatur]. Hoc videlicet illud esse sacrosanctum chrisma cognoscitur, quod non modo sacerdotes, reges atque prophetas unxit in Veteri Testamento, sed etiam sanctos apostolos, martyres et confessores sanctificavit in Novo. Hodie [hoc] etiam nos oleo divinae virtutis inungimur, ut in spiritualis palaestrae certamine colluctantes de subactis atque convictis hostibus triumphemus. De quo nimirum oleo propheta dicit: «Computrescet jugum a facie olei (Isai. X).» Nam, cum per hoc divini chrismatis sacramentum libertatis nobis spiritus redditur, servitutis antiquae jugum in putredinem necesse est redigatur. Hoc mysterium chrismatis propheta David indubitanter agnovit, cum vultus nostro in oleo exhilarandos esse cantavit (Psal. CIII). Enimvero cum mundi crimina diluvio quondam expiarentur effuso (Gen. VII); futuri muneris columbae similitudinem praetulit, cum olivae ramo pacem terris redditam nuntiavit. Ait enim Scriptura: «Exspectatis autem ultra septem diebus aliis, rursum dimisit Noe columbam ex arca. At illa venit ad eum ad vesperam, portans ramum olivae virentibus foliis in ore suo (Gen. VIII).» In emissione ac reversione columbae septenarius numerus ponitur, quia septem esse procul dubio sancti Spiritus dona noscuntur. Vespertina vero hora ad arcam columba revertitur, quia Spiritus sanctus, qui in mundi principio ferebatur super aquas (Gen. I), jam vesperascente saeculo sanctam replevit Ecclesiam.

Ad hoc etiam divini chrismatis pertinet sacramentum, quod omnipotens Deus Moysi famulo suo mandatum dedit, ut Aaron fratrem suum aqua prius ablueret, deinde per infusionem hujus unguenti constitueret sacerdotem: «Aaron, inquit, et filios ejus unges sanctificabisque eos, ut sacerdotio fungantur mihi. Filiis quoque Israel dices: Hoc oleum unctionis sanctum erit mihi in generationes vestras (Exod. XXX).» Porro autem, sicut jam abluto per diluvium mundo, cum olivae ramo ad arcam columba revertitur, sic etiam Aaron aqua prius ablutus est, deinde chrismate perunctus, ut ad sacerdotium promoveretur. Sic etiam nunc quilibet ad regenerationis gratiam veniens prius sacri baptismatis undis immergitur, ut postmodum divini chrismatis mysterio consignetur.

Today the holy chrism is prepared, through which the sanctification of all heavenly charisms is confirmed in us. For this surely is recognized to be that sacrosanct chrism which not only anointed priests, kings, and prophets in the Old Testament, but also sanctified the holy apostles, martyrs, and confessors in the New. Today also we are anointed with this oil of divine virtue, so that struggling in the contest of the spiritual gymnasium we may triumph over the subdued and convicted enemies. Concerning which oil surely the prophet says: "The yoke shall rot before the face of the oil (Isai. X)." For, when by this sacrament of the divine chrism the spirit of liberty is restored to us, the yoke of the ancient servitude must necessarily be reduced to rottenness. This mystery of the chrism the prophet David undoubtedly recognized, when he sang that our faces were to be exhilarated in oil (Psal. CIII). Truly when the crimes of the world were formerly expiated by the poured-out flood (Gen. VII); he presented the likeness of the future gift of the dove, when he announced peace restored to the earth with an olive branch. For the Scripture says: "But having waited yet seven other days, Noe again sent forth the dove from the ark. And she came to him in the evening, carrying a branch of olive with green leaves in her mouth (Gen. VIII)." In the sending forth and the return of the dove the number seven is placed, because surely the gifts of the Holy Spirit are known to be seven. But at the evening hour the dove returns to the ark, because the Holy Spirit, who in the beginning of the world was moved over the waters (Gen. I), has now, as the age grows toward evening, filled the holy Church.

To this also pertains the sacrament of the divine chrism, which almighty God gave as a command to His servant Moses, that he should first wash Aaron his brother with water, and then establish him as priest through the infusion of this ointment: "Aaron," He said, "and his sons you shall anoint, and you shall sanctify them, that they may execute the office of priesthood to me. To the sons of Israel also you shall say: This oil of unction shall be holy to me unto your generations (Exod. XXX)." Furthermore, just as when the world was already washed by the flood, the dove returned to the ark with an olive branch, so also Aaron was first washed with water, then anointed with chrism, so that he might be promoted to the priesthood. So even now anyone coming to the grace of regeneration is first immersed in the waters of holy baptism, so that afterward he may be sealed with the mystery of the divine chrism.

Illud praeterea oleum, quod et tabernaculum foederis et cuncta ejus utensilia consecravit, hoc divini chrismatis sacramentum perspicue figuravit. Ait enim Dominus Moysi: «Tolles oleum de olivetis mensura hin, faciesque unctionis oleum sanctum, unguentum compositum opere unguentarii, et unges eo tabernaculum testimonii, et arcam testamenti mensamque cum basibus suis, candelabrum et utensilia ejus, altaria thymiamatis et holocausti, et universam supellectilem, quae ad cultum eorum pertinet, sanctificabisque omnia, et erunt Sancta sanctorum; qui tetigerit ea sanctificabitur (Exod. XXX).» Mysticum itaque chrisma, quod tunc consecrabat tabernaculum in deserto, nunc Ecclesiam in novo sanctificat testamento. Quod etiam sacramentum tunc uberius et copiosius videtur impletum, cum Redemptor noster de Jordanis undis baptizatus exiit, et apertis coelis protinus in eum Spiritus sanctus in columbae specie manifesta visione descendit, moxque vox Patris intonans: «Hic est, inquit, Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui (Matth. III).» Hunc esse perspicue comprobans, cui David olim eodem Spiritu edoctus, aiebat: «Unxit te Dominus Deus tuus oleo laetitiae prae consortibus tuis (Psal. XLIV).» Ex illo sane tunc Spiritu, qui nostrum quoque chrisma nunc consecrat, tantam virtutem aquarum omnium natura concepit, ut in quibuscunque fluentibus sub professione deificae Trinitatis abluendus immergatur, plenum atque perfectum novae regenerationis mysterium divinitus impleatur.

Hoc nostrum chrisma illud etiam oleum typice designabat, quo Dominus in tabernaculo septem lucernas impleri ac jugiter ardere praecepit. «Praecipe, inquit, filiis Israel, ut afferant tibi oleum de olivis purissimum ac lucidum ad concinnandas lucernas jugiter extra velum testimonii in tabernaculo foederis, ponetque eas Aaron a vespere usque in mane coram Domino, cultu rituque perpetuo in generationibus vestris super candelabrum mundissimum ponetur semper in conspectu Domini (Lev. XXIV).» Quid autem per septem lucernas in tabernaculo, nisi septem significantur Ecclesiae in uno populo Christiano? In quibus nimirum oleum jubetur indesinenter ardere, quia in his sincera charitas, quae per Spiritum sanctum datur, gemini debet amoris igne fervescere, et claris atque conspicuis semper operibus coruscare. Sed cum una sit procul dubio catholica, universalis Ecclesia, sicut per Salomonem dicitur: «Una est columba mea, una genitricis suae (Cant. VI);» quid est, quod in sacris eloquiis septem esse referuntur Ecclesiae, nisi quia, quae una est per unitatem fidei, septiformis est per totidem dona Spiritus sancti?

Moreover, that oil, which consecrated both the tabernacle of the covenant and all its utensils, clearly figured this sacrament of the divine chrism. For the Lord said to Moses: "You shall take oil from the olive groves by the measure of a hin, and you shall make the holy oil of unction, an ointment composed by the work of a perfumer, and you shall anoint with it the tabernacle of testimony, and the ark of the testament and the table with its bases, the lampstand and its utensils, the altars of incense and of holocaust, and all the furniture which pertains to their worship, and you shall sanctify all things, and they shall be the Holy of holies; whoever shall touch them shall be sanctified (Exod. XXX)." Therefore the mystical chrism, which then consecrated the tabernacle in the desert, now sanctifies the Church in the new testament. Which sacrament also then seems to have been more richly and more copiously fulfilled, when our Redeemer, having been baptized, came out from the waters of the Jordan, and with the heavens opened, the Holy Spirit immediately descended upon Him in the form of a dove in a manifest vision, and soon the voice of the Father thundered: "This," He said, "is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matth. III)." Clearly proving Him to be the one to whom David, formerly taught by the same Spirit, said: "The Lord your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows (Psal. XLIV)." From that same Spirit, then, who also now consetrates our chrism, the nature of all waters conceived such power, that in whatever flowing waters one to be washed is immersed under the profession of the deifying Trinity, the full and perfect mystery of the new regeneration is divinely fulfilled.

This chrism of ours also typically designated that oil with which the Lord commanded the seven lamps in the tabernacle to be filled and to burn continually. "Command," He said, "the sons of Israel, that they bring to you the purest and clear oil from olives to prepare the lamps continually outside the veil of the testimony in the tabernacle of the covenant, and Aaron shall set them from evening until morning before the Lord, by a perpetual worship and rite in your generations; it shall be set always on the cleanest lampstand in the sight of the Lord (Lev. XXIV)." But what is signified by the seven lamps in the tabernacle, if not the seven Churches in the one Christian people? In which surely the oil is commanded to burn without ceasing, because in these sincere charity, which is given through the Holy Spirit, ought to glow with the fire of double love, and always to sparkle with bright and conspicuous works. But since there is undoubtedly one catholic, universal Church, as is said through Solomon: "My dove is one, the one of her mother (Cant. VI);" why is it that in the sacred discourses seven Churches are reported to be, if not because she who is one through the unity of faith, is sevenfold through as many gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Hae sunt enim septem illae mulieres, quae juxta prophetae vaticinium accepere virum unum (Isai. IV). Vir autem Ecclesiae Christus. Hoc plane sancti Spiritus oleo cuncta sacrarum Scripturarum pabula condiuntur, ut animarum nostrarum viscera saginentur. Hoc oleum vitalibus epulis eloquii coelestis infusum sapit in faucibus animae, cujus et stomachum recreat, et gustum percipientis obdulcat. Nam scriptum est: «Littera occidit, spiritus autem vivificat (II Cor. III).» Unde sciendum est quia omnes sacrorum voluminum paginae sancti Spiritus oleo sunt conditae. Quamobrem et in libro Numeri legitur: «Quia circuibat populus, et colligens manna frangebat mola, sive terrebat in mortario, coquens in olla, et faciens ex eo tortulas saporis quasi panis oleati (Num. XI).

Porro autem quasi per multa in cellario Domini dolia transitum habuimus, ut ad solum oleatum, velut olei vasculum pervenire possemus. Manna denique, quo plebs vivebat Israelitica, sacrum designabat eloquium, quo nutritur et vegetatur religio Christiana. Quod utique veraciter oleatum est, quia mystica sancti Spiritus est unctione conspersum. Notandum vero quia idem manna, quod in libro Numeri dicitur oleatum, in Exodo legitur non olei, sed mellis potius habuisse saporem: «Gustus, inquit, ejus erat quasi similae cum melle (Exod. XVI).» Quidnam est quod angelicus ille cibus prius dicitur mellis exhibuisse dulcedinem, et postmodum non mellis, sed olei praebuisse suavitatem, nisi quod Redemptor noster sacrarum omnium auctor et conditor Scripturarum, quem videlicet illud manna principaliter figurabat, et ante passionem, velut mel dulcedinem exhibuit miraculorum, et post ascensionem suam tanquam oleum, in discipulos suos effudit Spiritum sanctum? (Act. I et II.) Nam quasi mellis videtur propinasse dulcedinem, dum signis atque virtutibus coruscavit; olei vero tunc suavitatem dedisse, cum in apostolos suos sancti Spiritus paracleti dona diffudit. Quem videlicet ordinem Moyses congrue tenuit, cum in Deuteronomio de petra, quae et nihilominus manna erat, typice decantavit: «Suxerunt, inquit, mel de petra et oleum de firma petra (Deut. XXXII).» De hoc mysticae unctionis oleo sponsa ad sponsum dicit in Canticis: «Unguentum effusum nomen tuum (Cant. I).» Unguentum quidem effusum sponsi nomen asseritur, quia sicut a chrismate Christus, ita consequenter a Christo dicitur Christianus.

Quia igitur, dilectissimi, per gratiam Salvatoris nostri jam hujus chrismatis percepimus sacramentum, quia jam regiae dignitatis expressum praeferimus in fronte signaculum, studeamus ita nobiliter vivere ut conversatio nostra tam divinis tamque magnificis mysteriis valeat concordare. Nos enim sumus, quibus per primum apostolorum dicitur: «Vos genus electum, regale sacerdotium, gens sancta, populus acquisitionis, ut virtutem annuntietis ejus qui de tenebris vos vocavit in admirabile lumen suum (I Petr. II).»

For these are those seven women who, according to the prophecy of the prophet, received one husband (Isai. IV). Moreover, the husband of the Church is Christ. Clearly all the foods of the holy Scriptures are seasoned with this oil of the Holy Spirit, so that the viscera of our souls may be fattened. This oil, infused into the vital feasts of the heavenly discourse, tastes sweet in the throat of the soul, whose stomach it both refreshes and whose taste it sweetens for the one perceiving. For it is written: "The letter kills, but the spirit gives life (II Cor. III)." Whence it is to be known that all the pages of the sacred volumes are seasoned with the oil of the Holy Spirit. Wherefore also in the book of Numbers it is read: "Because the people went about, and collecting manna ground it with a mill, or beat it in a mortar, cooking it in a pot, and making from it cakes of a taste like oiled bread (Num. XI)."

Furthermore, we have had a transition as if through many jars in the storehouse of the Lord, so that we might be able to arrive at the oiled part alone, as if at a vessel of oil. Finally manna, by which the Israelite people lived, designated the sacred discourse, by which the Christian religion is nourished and quickened. Which surely is truly oiled, because it is sprinkled with the mystical unction of the Holy Spirit. It is to be noted, indeed, that the same manna, which in the book of Numbers is called oiled, in Exodus is read to have had the taste not of oil, but rather of honey: "Its taste," he says, "was like flour with honey (Exod. XVI)." Why is it that that angelic food is first said to have exhibited the sweetness of honey, and afterward provided the pleasantness not of honey, but of oil, if not because our Redeemer, the author and founder of all the sacred Scriptures, whom that manna principally figured, both before the passion exhibited the sweetness of miracles like honey, and after His ascension poured out the Holy Spirit upon His disciples like oil (Act. I and II)? For He seems to have offered the sweetness of honey while He sparkled with signs and wonders; but to have given the pleasantness of oil then, when He diffused the gifts of the Holy Spirit the Paraclete upon His apostles. Which order Moses fittingly held, when in Deuteronomy he typically sang concerning the rock, which was nevertheless also manna: "They sucked," he says, "honey from the rock and oil from the firm rock (Deut. XXXII)." Concerning this oil of mystical unction the bride says to the bridegroom in the Canticles: "Your name is oil poured out (Cant. I)." The name of the bridegroom is asserted to be oil poured out, because just as Christ is named from chrism, so consequently from Christ one is called a Christian.

Because therefore, most beloved, through the grace of our Savior we have already perceived the sacrament of this chrism, because we already bear on our forehead the expressed seal of royal dignity, let us strive to live so nobly that our conversation may be able to harmonize with such divine and such magnificent mysteries. For we are those to whom it is said through the first of the apostles: "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people, that you may announce the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His admirable light (I Petr. II)."

Et certe satis ignobile est sub vitiorum carnalium vivere servitute, qui, Deo nos adoptante, regii obtinemus generis dignitatem. Nimis turpe est ut terrenae simus concupiscentiae dediti, qui et Dei vocamur filii, et ad obtinendam coelestem haereditatem per Christi gratiam meremur ascribi. Plane, quia crucifixi praeceptoris nos constat esse discipulos, dignum est, ut etiam nosmetipsos huic nequam saeculo praebeamus exstinctos. A portanda igitur cruce post magistrum nostrum et Dominum nulla nos negotii temporalis cura praepediat, nullus amor terrenae substantiae, vel illecebrae carnalis avertat. Dirigamus fidei, ac devotionis nostrae oculos per stratam jam, nobisque propositam viam crucis, ut per eam inoffensis gressibus incedentes, ad eum mereamur attingere, qui auctor et provocator est ad gloriam resurrectionis. Qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

* SERMO XI. DE ANNUNTIATIONE BEATISSIMAE VIRGINIS MARIAE. (XXV MART.)

Exsultate, fratres, in Domino, quia de domina illa sermo succedit, quae singularem in cordibus nostris sibi vindicat principatum. Haec est, ad cujus nomen corpus humiliter inclinatis, cujus horis reverenter assistitis, cujus memoriam jugiter frequentatis. Haec est, quae vestris affectibus suaviter indulcescit, quia magna multitudo dulcedinis ejus. Spiritus enim ejus super mel dulcis; in qua dulcis Dominus, cum omni sua dulcedine supervenit. Cum enim fecerit Deus omnia opera sua valde bona (Gen. I), hoc melius fecit, consecrans sibi in ea reclinatorium aureum, in qua sola se post tumultus angelorum et hominum reclinaret, et requiem inveniret. Hoc est quod natura miratur, reveretur angelus, veretur homo, stupescit coelum, extremit terra, infernus exhorret. In hujus utero majestas Altissimi mirabiliter liquefacta, sicut adipe et pinguedine replevit terras, infudit coelos, inferna respersit. Hic exinanivit semetipsum (Philip. II) excelsus et immensus, mensuram bonam, et confertam et coagitatam mittens in sinum nostrum (Luc. VI). Hic divinis manibus unctus est oleo laetitiae, et sicut ab altare in summum pontificem consecratus. De hoc altari ad aram crucis ascendens proprio cruore tanquam alterius generis oleo perfusus, jam non solum consecratus, sed et consecrans, totum corpus machinae mundialis largiori ligamine copulavit. Facessat igitur moeror, tristitia fugiat, eliminetur dolor, rancor abscedat, ut liceat vacare et videre cum Moyse visionem hanc grandem (Exod. III), qualiter Deus in hoc ventre concipiatur, decipiatur diabolus, recipiatur perditum, indebitum accipiatur. Totum me trahit affectio, sed oratio deficit, et dives cogitatio vocis paupertate confunditur. Fervent interiora, et in undosam ebulliunt altitudinem, sed frigiditas linguae cumulos refrigerat exundantes.

And certainly it is ignoble enough to live under the servitude of carnal vices, we who, with God adopting us, obtain the dignity of a royal race. It is too shameful that we should be given to earthly concupiscence, we who are called both sons of God and deserve to be enrolled through the grace of Christ to obtain the heavenly inheritance. Plainly, because it is established that we are disciples of a crucified teacher, it is worthy that we also show ourselves dead to this wicked world. Therefore, from carrying the cross after our Master and Lord, let no care of temporal business hinder us, let no love of earthly substance or carnal allure avert us. Let us direct the eyes of our faith and devotion through the way of the cross already paved and proposed to us, so that walking through it with unoffended steps, we may deserve to reach Him who is the author and provoker to the glory of the resurrection. Who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ages of ages. Amen.

* SERMON XI. ON THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. (MARCH 25)

Exult, brothers, in the Lord, because there follows a discourse concerning that Lady who claims for herself a singular principality in our hearts. This is she to whose name you humbly incline your body, at whose hours you reverently assist, whose memory you continually frequent. This is she who sweetly becomes honey-sweet to your affections, because the multitude of her sweetness is great. For her spirit is sweet above honey; in whom the sweet Lord, with all His sweetness, came upon her. For when God had made all His works very good (Gen. I), He made this better, consecrating for Himself in her a golden resting-place, in which alone He might recline after the tumults of angels and men, and find rest. This is what nature wonders at, the angel reveres, man fears, heaven is amazed at, earth trembles at, hell dreads. In her womb the majesty of the Most High was wonderfully liquefied, and as if with fatness and richness it filled the lands, infused the heavens, and sprinkled the lower regions. Here the High and Immense emptied Himself (Philip. II), sending into our bosom a good measure, and pressed down and shaken together (Luc. VI). Here He was anointed with the oil of gladness by divine hands, and as if from the altar He was consecrated into the high priest. Ascending from this altar to the altar of the cross, drenched in His own blood as if by oil of another kind, now not only consecrated, but also consecrating, He coupled the whole body of the worldly machine with a more bountiful bond. Let sorrow therefore depart, let sadness flee, let grief be eliminated, let rancor withdraw, so that it may be permitted to be at leisure and see with Moses this great vision (Exod. III): how God is conceived in this womb, the devil is deceived, the lost is received, the undue is accepted. Affection draws me entirely, but prayer fails, and rich thought is confounded by the poverty of the voice. My inward parts glow, and boil over into a wavy depth, but the coldness of my tongue cools the overflowing heaps.

Quid est, beatissima? Nunquid ita sensim taciturnus obdormiam, ut ibi mutus sim, ubi omnis loquitur creatura? Verumtamen non tacebo, et non quiescam, donec egrediatur ut splendor vultus tuus, et sermo de te conceptus, si non ut lampas, saltem ut scintilla accendatur (Isai. LXII). Movet me, fateor, quod permittente Deo peccant rationabiles creaturae, et multis annorum millibus tam coelestia quam terrestria incassum stare videantur, servituris istis, illis dirutis. Stat illa magna civitas civium suorum numerositate fraudata, et a stellantibus palatiis multiplex habitantium multitudo propellitur; obscurantur stellarii ignes, solem loquor, lunam et stellas, et multa sibi detracta luminis claritate multantur, terra maledicitur, condemnatur hominum successio, «et omnis creatura, juxta Apostolum, ingemiscit; et parturit (Rom. III).» Tacet Deus omnipotens, et ordinans ejus omnipotentia tantam dissimulat confusionem. Tandem nascitur Maria, et ad nubiles annos egrediens speciem induit speciosam, quae ipsum alliciat Deum, et divinitatis oculos in se convertat. Vide quid inde dicat ille non minimus explorator secretorum Dei: «Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam, et obliviscere populum tuum, et domum patris tui. Et concupivit rex decorem tuum, quoniam ipse est Dominus Deus tuus (Psal. XLIV).» Germinat igitur virga Jesse de tortuosa radice generis humani, et de patriarcharum arbore in altitudinem et rectitudinem erumpens, omnem ignorat nodositatem, filiorum tenebras nescit, fructuosa quaeque non habet. Videt et ardet ille vehemens amator, et totum epithalamium in laudibus ejus decantat, ubi manifeste sponsus inducitur spirans amorem sincerissimum, nec ultra valens dissimulare quod patitur. Evocatur statim coelestis ille conventus, et juxta prophetam init Deus consilium, cogit concilium (Isai. XVI), facit sermonem cum angelis de restauratione eorum, de redemptione hominum, de elementorum renovatione, ac illis stupentibus et mirantibus prae gaudio, de modo redemptionis. Et statim de thesauro divinitatis Mariae nomen evolvitur, et per ipsam, et in ipsa, et de ipsa, et cum ipsa totum hoc faciendum decernitur, ut sicut sine illo nihil factum, ita sine illa nihil refectum sit. Traditur epistola Gabrieli, in qua salutatio Virginis, incarnatio Redemptoris, modus redemptionis, plenitudo gratiae, gloriae magnitudo, multitudo laetitiae continetur.

What is it, most blessed one? Shall I fall asleep so gradually silent, that I may be mute there, where every creature speaks? Nevertheless I will not be silent, and I will not rest, until your face goes forth as brightness, and the word conceived of you, if not as a lamp, at least as a spark, be kindled (Isai. LXII). It moves me, I confess, that with God permitting it rational creatures sin, and for many thousands of years both heavenly and earthly things seem to stand in vain, those being about to serve, these being destroyed. That great city stands defrauded of the numerosity of its citizens, and from the starry palaces a manifold multitude of inhabitants is propelled; the starry fires are obscured, I speak of the sun, the moon and the stars, and they are punished with much brightness of light taken away from them, the earth is cursed, the succession of men is condemned, "and every creature, according to the Apostle, groans and travails (Rom. VIII)." Almighty God is silent, and His ordaining omnipotence dissembles such great confusion. At last Mary is born, and going forth to cloudy years she puts on a beautiful appearance, which may allure God Himself, and turn the eyes of the divinity upon herself. See what that not least explorer of the secrets of God says concerning this: "Hear, daughter, and see, and incline your ear, and forget your people, and the house of your father. And the king has desired your beauty, since He is the Lord your God (Psal. XLIV)." Therefore the rod of Jesse buds from the tortuous root of the human race, and breaking out from the tree of the patriarchs into height and rectitude, it ignores all knottiness, it does not know the darkness of leaves, it does not have anything unfruitful. That vehement lover sees and burns, and sings the whole epithalamium in her praises, where the bridegroom is manifestly induced breathing most sincere love, and no longer able to dissemble what he suffers. Immediately that heavenly assembly is called forth, and according to the prophet God enters into counsel, gathers a council (Isai. XVI), makes a discourse with the angels about their restoration, about the redemption of men, about the renovation of the elements, and with them being amazed and wondering for joy, about the manner of redemption. And immediately from the treasury of divinity the name of Mary is unfolded, and through her, and in her, and from her, and with her, it is decreed that all this must be done, so that just as without Him nothing was made, so without her nothing should be remade. The letter is handed to Gabriel, in which is contained the salutation of the Virgin, the incarnation of the Redeemer, the manner of redemption, the fullness of grace, the magnitude of glory, and the multitude of joy.

Missus est ergo angelus Gabriel a Deo ad Virginem, quae, postquam ei locutus est, sensit Deum suis illapsum visceribus, majestatemque illius virginalis ventris brevitate conclusam (Luc. I). O venter diffusior coelis, terris amplior, capacior elementis, qui totum claudit omnia concludentem, in quo Deus gloriae reclinatur. Denique et archangelus ait: «Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum (Ibid.):» quia a Deo electam et praeelectam, totam eam rapturus erat sibi Spiritus sanctus et coelestibus insigniturus ornamentis. Jam consecranda erat in locum voluptatis, de quo fons ille debebat ascendere, qui universam terrae superficiem irrigaret (Gen. II).

Satis huc usque sparsimus verba, et volaticis sermonibus diversa praeseminavimus; nunc insistamus hic, si forte aliquid dignum elicere valeamus. «Fluvius, ait Scriptura, egrediebatur de loco voluptatis ad irrigandam universam superficiem terrae: qui inde dividitur in quatuor capita (Ibid.).» Fluvius iste est Deus meus Jesus, qui a duobus locis voluptatis egreditur, ex utero Patris, ex utero Virginis. Unde Propheta: «Dominus Deus noster fluvius gloriosus, exsiliens in terram sitientem (Isai. LIX).» Sed ineffabilibus differentiis longe aliter a Patre quam a matre egreditur: quia etsi temporalis nativitas gloriosa est, multo gloriosior est aeterna. Orantibus igitur vobis de utraque generatione volo aperire quod sentio, non quod aliquid exponere praesumam, cum hoc ultra omnium vires (quanto magis meas?) sit, et extremae dementiae sit velle fari ineffabilia, maxime hominem imperitum. Non enim oblitus sum Salomonem dicentem: «Sicut qui nimium comedit mel evomit illud; sic qui scrutator est majestatis opprimetur a gloria (Prov. XXV).» De utraque enim per prophetam dici puto: «Generationem ejus quis enarrabit? (Isai. v.)» Quia sane illa Patris ineffabilis et inaccessibilis est et nulli creaturae pervia; hoc sensu credo Apostolum dixisse de Deo: «Qui solus habitat lucem inaccessibilem (I Tim. I),» cum etiam puriores naturae tanto reverberentur intuitu, nec possint irrumpere tantae claritatis abyssum. Ipse etiam Filius protestatur: «Nemo novit Filium, nisi Pater, neque Patrem quis novit, nisi Filius, et cui voluerit Filius revelare (Matth. XI):» Non sicut est, sed sicut capere potest, cui tanta dignatio revelatur.

The angel Gabriel was therefore sent by God to the Virgin, who, after he spoke to her, felt God slipped into her inward parts, and His majesty concluded within the brevity of that virginal womb (Luc. I). O womb more diffused than the heavens, wider than the lands, more capacious than the elements, which shuts in the whole Concluder of all things, in whom the God of glory is reclined. Finally also the archangel says: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you (Ibid.):" because the Holy Spirit was about to snatch her entirely, chosen and pre-elected by God, for Himself and to distinguish her with heavenly ornaments. Already she was to be consecrated into a place of pleasure, from which that fountain ought to ascend, which should irrigate the whole surface of the earth (Gen. II).

We have scattered words enough thus far, and have pre-sown diverse things in volatile discourses; now let us insist here, if perchance we may be able to elicit something worthy. "A river," says the Scripture, "went out from the place of pleasure to irrigate the whole surface of the earth: which is divided from there into four heads (Ibid.)." That river is my God Jesus, who goes out from two places of pleasure: from the womb of the Father, and from the womb of the Virgin. Whence the Prophet says: "The Lord our God is a glorious river, leaping forth into a thirsty land (Isai. LIX)." But by ineffable differences He goes out far differently from the Father than from the mother: because even if the temporal birth is glorious, much more glorious is the eternal. To you praying, therefore, I wish to open what I feel concerning both generations, not that I presume to expound anything, since this is beyond the strength of all (how much more my own?), and it is of extreme madness to wish to speak the ineffable, especially for an unskilled man. For I have not forgotten Solomon saying: "As he who eats too much honey vomits it; so he who is a searcher of majesty shall be oppressed by glory (Prov. XXV)." For concerning both I think it is said through the prophet: "Who shall declare His generation? (Isai. lIII.)" Because surely that of the Father is ineffable and inaccessible and pervious to no creature; in this sense I believe the Apostle said of God: "Who alone inhabits inaccessible light (I Tim. VI)," when even the purer natures are reverberated by such an intuition, nor are they able to break into the abyss of such great brightness. The Son Himself also protests: "No one knows the Son, except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and he to whom the Son should wish to reveal Him (Matth. XI):" Not as He is, but as one can grasp, to whom such great condescension is revealed.

Unde et illa sublimis anima, quae usque ad tertium coelum in divitias gloriae rapta fuerat (II Cor. XII), dicit: «Ego me non arbitror comprehendisse (Phil. III).» Verissima igitur definitio est quia illam gignentis, et geniti generationem nullus omnino penetrat intellectus. Hanc etiam de matre omni humanae creaturae reor inextricabilem: Nescio, utrum ab illa excellentiore natura valeat comprehendi. Quis enim comprehendat conjunctionem carnis et Verbi; qualiter Deus, et homo in unam personam conveniant salvis imperturbatisque proprietatibus naturarum? Unusquisque in suo sensu abundat; ego hanc omnem sensum supergredi credo, veterum virorum vestigiis inhaerens, qui super hoc sanas et inconcussas sententias reliquerunt.

Ad paternam igitur generationem recurrentes, locum voluptatis, Patrem esse censemus, cum Deus illocalis sit, sed efficientias rerum, nisi per vulgatos sermones, explicare non possumus. In ipso autem omnem voluptatem esse intelligit qui legit Apostolum dicentem: «Quoniam ex ipso, et per ipsum, et in ipso sunt omnia (Rom. XI),» et alium ex illo duodeno apice similiter eructantem: «Omne datum optimum, et omne donum perfectum desursum est descendens a Patre luminum (Jac. I).» Ipse etiam Filius dicit: «Haec est vita aeterna ut cognoscant te solum verum Deum (Joan. XVII).» Cognitio igitur Patris, vita aeterna est; et ubi vita aeterna, ibi sempiterna voluptas, quia gignitur de utero Patris Deus de Deo, lumen de lumine, de Domino Dominus. Egreditur autem identitate, quia idem est, quod Pater. Idem dico, secundum substantiam, non secundum personam. Egreditur et aequalitate, quia pari omnipotentia respicit Generantem, cum omnia, quae potest Pater, possit et Filius, sicut ipse testatur: «Omnia quae facit Pater, facit et Filius; nec potest Filius facere quidquam, nisi quod viderit Patrem facientem (Joan. V).» Egreditur et aeternitate, quia licet generetur, non est posterior Generante, sed ambo unius antiquitatis sunt, si tamen vocabuli novitatem non exhortes. Quod licet quoquo modo significet, quae dicuntur, longe tamen est a sententiae majestate. Egreditur similitudine, quia similis est Patris, Patris imago, splendor gloriae et figura substantiae ejus (Hebr. I). Egreditur alternitate, quia alius est ab illo, alius, dico, non aliud: «Ego, inquit, et Pater, unum sumus (Joan. X).» Unum dixit, non unus, quia unum significat substantiae unitatem, sumus vero personarum proprietatem.

Whence also that sublime soul, which had been snatched up even to the third heaven into the riches of glory (II Cor. XII), says: "I do not think myself to have apprehended (Phil. III)." Therefore the truest definition is that no intellect at all penetrates that generation of the Begetter and the Begotten. This also concerning the mother I judge inextricable for every human creature: I do not know whether it can be apprehended by that more excellent nature. For who may comprehend the conjunction of the flesh and the Word; in what manner God and man meet in one person with the properties of the natures safe and undisturbed? Each one abounds in his own sense; I believe this surpasses all sense, adhering to the footsteps of the ancient men, who left sound and unshaken sentences upon this.

Returning therefore to the paternal generation, we judge the Father to be the place of pleasure, although God is illocal, but we cannot explain the efficiencies of things except through common discourses. Moreover, he who reads the Apostle saying: "Since from Him, and through Him, and in Him are all things (Rom. XI)," understands that all pleasure is in Him, and another from that twelve-fold summit [the Apostles] similarly eructating: "Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, descending from the Father of lights (Jac. I)." The Son Himself also says: "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God (Joan. XVII)." The knowledge of the Father, therefore, is eternal life; and where there is eternal life, there is sempiternal pleasure, because God from God, light from light, Lord from Lord is begotten from the womb of the Father. Moreover, He goes out by identity, because He is the same as the Father. I say the same according to substance, not according to person. He goes out also by equality, because with equal omnipotence He regards the Begetter, since all things which the Father can do, the Son also can do, as He Himself testifies: "All things that the Father does, the Son also does; nor can the Son do anything, except what He has seen the Father doing (Joan. V)." He goes out also by eternity, because although He is generated, He is not posterior to the Begetter, but both are of one antiquity, if however you do not abhor the novelty of the word. Which although it may signify in some way what is said, it is nevertheless far from the majesty of the sentence. He goes out by similitude, because He is similar to the Father, the image of the Father, the brightness of glory and the figure of His substance (Hebr. I). He goes out by alternity, because He is another from Him—another, I say, not another thing: "I," He says, "and the Father are one (Joan. X)." He said "one" [unum, neuter], not "one" [unus, masculine], because "one" signifies the unity of substance, but "are" signifies the property of persons.

Sic igitur et longe excellentiori modo de Patre Filius egrediens inundat angelicas stationes, quia, juxta Salomonem, «fons sapientiae Verbum Dei in excelsis (Eccli. I).» Citharaedus puer de hoc fonte pleno ventre potaverat, cum diceret: «Apud te est fons vitae (Psal. XXXV),» quia non solum tu vita, sed et Filius tuus fons vitae est. Et, ut patenter quid sentiebat, ostenderet, subjunxit: «In lumine tuo videbimus lumen (Ibid.).»

«Ad irrigandam universam superficiem terrae (Gen. II).» Quaenam terra est in illa coelorum summitate reposita, quam non praeterfluat, et irriget fluvius gloriosus? Regnum coelorum terra viventium est, de qua dicit sanctus: «Portio mea, Domine, in terra viventium (Psal. XIV).» Et: «Credo videre bona Domini in terra viventium (Psal. XXVI).» Et, «Placebo Domino in regione vivorum (CXIV).» Irrigatio haec indicibilis est. Inebriantur quippe angeli ab ubertate domus Dei, et torrente voluptatis ejus potantur. Hic quid dicam nescio, quia plurimus stupor sensum opprimit atque mentem. Ubi sunt oratorii sermones, quos in fornace rhetorica omnis ille philosophorum conflavit chorus? Ubi sunt gigantes a saeculo nominati, qui ab initio fuerunt statura magna, scientes bellum, languentes circa pugnas verborum? Nunquid non maximus ille gigas, Platonem loquor, ab intellectu tam purissimae veritatis repulsus est? Nunquid non acerrimo mentis ingenio tangens, sed non attingens divinitatem Dei dicit: Unum inveni, quod cuncta operetur; et aliud, per quod cuncta efficiuntur; tertium autem invenire non potui? Recte de Spiritu sancto inscius, qui illi non erat infusus, qui sanctarum revelationum magister est, qui revelat Paulo quae oculus non vidit, sicut idem Apostolus gloriatur: «Nobis, inquit, revelavit Deus (I Cor. II).» Per quid, Apostole? «Per Spiritum suum (Ibid.),» non per spiritum nostrum, quem secuti philosophi, et seducti sunt et seduxerunt. Ille noster philosophus, qui super senes, et super omnes docentes se intellexit (Psal. CXVIII), quid super hoc senserit, audiamus: «Rigans, inquit, montes de superioribus suis (Psal. CIII).» De sublimioribus quippe angelis docet, qui non per speculum in aenigmate, sed facie ad faciem ipsam Dei substantiam luminibus indefessis spectant (I Cor. XIII).

Sequitur: «Qui inde dividitur in quatuor capita.» In quae quatuor capita dicamus breviter, quia grandis nobis restat via. In admirationem, qua tota obstupet illa dignior creatura de Creatoris gloria et gloriae ratione. In puritatem, quia non in vase testeo, vel fragilitate complexionis humanae bibunt de torrente voluptatis, sed remoto velamine, hauriunt aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris (Isai. XII).

Thus therefore and in a far more excellent manner the Son going out from the Father inundates the angelic stations, because, according to Solomon, "the Word of God in the highest is a fountain of wisdom (Eccli. I)." The boy harper had drunk with a full belly from this fountain, when he said: "With You is the fountain of life (Psal. XXXV)," because not only are You life, but also Your Son is the fountain of life. And, that he might openly show what he felt, he subjoined: "In Your light we shall see light (Ibid.)."

"To irrigate the whole surface of the earth (Gen. II)." What earth is that replaced in that summit of the heavens, which the glorious river does not flow past and irrigate? The kingdom of heaven is the land of the living, concerning which the saint says: "My portion, O Lord, in the land of the living (Psal. CXLI)." And: "I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living (Psal. XXVI)." And: "I will please the Lord in the region of the living (CXIV)." This irrigation is unspeakable. For the angels are inebriated from the richness of the house of God, and are given to drink from the torrent of His pleasure. Here I know not what to say, because a great stupor oppresses both sense and mind. Where are the oratorical discourses, which all that chorus of philosophers forged in the rhetorical furnace? Where are the giants named from of old, who from the beginning were of great stature, knowing war, languishing about the battles of words? Was not that greatest giant—I speak of Plato—repulsed from the understanding of such a most pure truth? Touching with a most sharp genius of mind, but not reaching the divinity of God, did he not say: I have found one, which works all things; and another, through which all things are effected; but a third I could not find? Rightly ignorant of the Holy Spirit, who had not been infused into him, who is the master of holy revelations, who reveals to Paul what eye has not seen, as the same Apostle glories: "To us," he says, "God has revealed (I Cor. II)." Through what, Apostle? "Through His Spirit (Ibid.)," not through our spirit, which the philosophers followed and were both seduced and seduced others. Our philosopher, who understood above the elders and above all teaching him (Psal. CXVIII), let us hear what he felt concerning this: "Watering," he says, "the mountains from His higher places (Psal. CIII)." Surely he teaches concerning the more sublime angels, who not through a mirror in an enigma, but face to face behold the very substance of God with untiring eyes (I Cor. XIII).

There follows: "Which from there is divided into four heads." Into which four heads let us speak briefly, because a great way remains for us. Into admiration, by which that whole more worthy creature is stupefied concerning the glory of the Creator and the reason of His glory. Into purity, because they do not drink from the torrent of pleasure in an earthen vessel or the fragility of the human complexion, but with the veil removed, they draw waters in joy from the fountains of the Savior (Isai. XII).

In satietatem, quia et si in eum desiderant prospicere, tamen non desiderium necessitatem, vel necessitas miseriam inducit, sed mirabiliori modo, et semper desiderant, ut semper satientur, et semper satiantur, ut semper desiderent. In securitatem, quia de sua stabilitate certi, perennibus gaudiis immerguntur, exspectantes beatam spem, et adventum gloriae magni Dei (Tit. II), quando fiet unum ovile et unus pastor (Joan. X), et superna illa Hierusalem consummabitur in idipsum. Sic influit fluvius iste per angelicas officinas. But faith captures all these things, reason knows them not, human intellect is ignorant of them. Haec sunt fortassis illa quatuor, quae vas electionis felici quaternario in Epistola ad Hebraeos dividit, dicens: «Non accessistis ad montem fumantem, sed ad montem Sion, ad Hierusalem civitatem Dei viventis, ad multorum millium angelorum frequentiam, ad Ecclesiam primitivorum scriptam in coelis.»

Nunc accingamus nos ad videndum qualiter egrediatur de Virgine, quia egressio ista dulcior et affectuosior est humanae miseriae, quae intuentium pectora concutit, irrorat oculos, et beatis fontibus vultus amantium superfundit. Hic locum voluptatis uterum Mariae intelligo, in quo cumulavit omnes delicias deliciarum Dominus, de cujus deliciis Spiritus sanctus admiratorio sermone in amoris Cantico sic eructat: «Quae est ista, quae ascendit de deserto deliciis affluens? (Cant. VI.)» Nunquid in angelis voluptatem habet Altissimus, in quibus ipse reperit pravitatem? Nunquid in constellatione, vel scintillatione stellarum, quarum aliae convertuntur in sanguinem, aliae cadunt de coelo, aliae in tenebras obscurantur? Nunquid in aere, vel igne, vel ventis? Nequaquam, quia «non in igne Dominus, non in commotione Dominus, non in spiritu Dominus (III Reg. XIX),» si verax est ille qui curru igneo, et equis igneis est assumptus in coelum (IV Reg. II). Nunquid in aquis, ubi furens et tortuosus Leviathan immoratur, aut in terra, quae sub maledicto Adae spinas emittit et tribulos? Non est locus voluptatis, nisi uterus Virginis.

Ex hoc egreditur cum humanitate, quia vestitus cilicio nostrae mortalitatis visibilis humanis oculis apparuit, et de Virgine virgam, de libro autem generationis lineam faciens, divinitatis hamum innexuit, quem carne operuit virginali, ut draco magnus illectus ad carnem ferrum divini numinis subsentiret. Egreditur et cum novitate, quia nunquam sic natus est homo, sicut ipse pascitur. Primus enim homo primo de terra formatur, secundo, mulier ex ejus latere fabricatur, tertio Cain consuetudinario ordine nascendi gignitur ab utroque.

Into satiety, because even if they desire to look into Him, nevertheless desire does not induce necessity, or necessity misery, but in a more wonderful way, they always desire so that they may always be satisfied, and they are always satisfied so that they may always desire. Into security, because certain of their stability, they are immersed in perennial joys, expecting the blessed hope and the coming of the glory of the great God (Tit. II), when there shall be one fold and one shepherd (Joan. X), and that heavenly Jerusalem shall be consummated into itself. Thus this river flows in through the angelic workshops. But faith captures all these things, reason knows them not, human intellect is ignorant of them. These are perhaps those four things which the vessel of election [Paul] divides by a happy quaternary in the Epistle to the Hebrews, saying: "You have not approached a smoking mountain, but to Mount Sion, to the city of the living God Jerusalem, to the company of many thousands of angels, to the Church of the firstborn written in the heavens (Hebr. XII)."

Now let us gird ourselves to see in what manner He goes out from the Virgin, because this going out is sweeter and more affectionate to human misery, which strikes the breasts of those beholding, moistens the eyes, and overflows the faces of lovers with blessed fountains. Here I understand the place of pleasure to be the womb of Mary, in which the Lord accumulated all the delights of delights, concerning whose delights the Holy Spirit in an admiring discourse in the Song of Love thus eructates: "Who is she that ascends from the desert, abounding in delights? (Cant. VI.)" Does the Most High have pleasure in the angels, in whom He Himself found depravity? Does He in the constellation or scintillation of the stars, some of which are turned into blood, others fall from heaven, others are obscured in darkness? Does He in the air, or fire, or winds? By no means, because "the Lord is not in the fire, the Lord is not in the commotion, the Lord is not in the spirit (III Reg. XIX)," if he is true who was taken up into heaven in a chariot of fire and with horses of fire (IV Reg. II). Does He in the waters, where the raging and tortuous Leviathan dwells, or on the earth, which under the curse of Adam sends forth thorns and thistles? The womb of the Virgin is the only place of pleasure.

From this He goes forth with humanity, because clothed in the hairshirt of our mortality, He appeared visible to human eyes; and making a rod from the Virgin, and a line from the book of generation, He attached the hook of divinity, which He covered with virginal flesh, so that the great dragon, enticed to the flesh, might feel beneath it the iron of the divine power. He goes forth also with novelty, because never was a man born as He is fed. For the first man was first formed from the earth; second, the woman was fashioned from his side; third, Cain was begotten by both in the customary order of birth.

Solus iste de sola virgine nascitur, et Virginis uterum novo et singulari partu divinitas humanata sigillat. Ubi nunc Aristotelicae subtilitatis facunda quidem, sed infecunda loquacitas? Si peperit, cum viro concubuit? Velit, nolit, vertitur in habitum privatio, nec astringitur dialecticis terminis omnium terminator, ad cujus imperium parit natura, desuescit consuetudo. Egreditur etiam cum claritate. Nascente quippe illo, sepelitur omnis illa stellantium luminum luminosa serenitas, et stella candidior lucidioribus radiis praescintillans totam sibi coeli rapit positionem. Ambulant reges in splendore ortus ejus (Isai. LX), quoniam ecce reges congregati sunt, convenerunt in unum. Ipsi videntes sic Deum et hominem nascentem, matrem et Virginem parientem, admirati sunt, conturbati sunt, commoti sunt, tremor apprehendit eos (Psal. XLVII) in tantorum luce miraculorum. Egreditur et cum paupertate, quia pannis vilissimis involutus et praesepi durissimo reclinatus (Luc. II) jam ex tunc sanctissimis membris legem martyrii praefigebat. Egreditur occulte, quia subtilissimus ille fraudium investigator ab altitudine tantae dignationis excluditur. Hinc est quod ambiguis altercationibus fatigatus, nunc illum tentat, nunc tentatum Filium appellat Altissimi, nunc instruit crucem, nunc destruit, mandatis per mulierem consuetum sibi organum: «Nihil tibi, et justo illi (Matth. XXVII).»

Sequitur: «Ad irrigandam universam superficiem terrae.» Ad terrenam miseriam expiandam, quam nobis in haereditatem primus ille peccator reliquerat. Volo ut Apostolus hic eum mihi, sicut et superius, in quatuor capita distribuat, quia securius ejus expositionem suscipio. «Qui factus est, inquit, nobis sapientia, justitia, sanctificatio et redemptio (I Cor. I).» Ad nos quippe veniens, qui eramus in carcere, primo omnium tenebras ignorantiae nostrae depulit luce sapientiae suae, deinde per justitiam, quae ex fide est (Rom. X), solvit funes peccatorum nostrorum, sanctificans nos in suo corpore, redimens in corporis passione. «Dominus enim soluit compeditos, Dominus illuminat caecos (Psal. CXLV); sanctificat tabernaculum suum (Psal. XLV); de mana redemit inimici (Psal. CV).» Dividitur, et in patientiam, qua peccatores sustinet; in misericordiam, qua poenitentes fovet; in largitatem, qua proficientes exaltat; in fortitudinem, qua exaltatos conservat. De hoc secundo quaternario toto hoc adventu vestrae fraternitati confabulatus sum, per fluminum decursionem et nominum interpretationem moralia mysticis internectens; utrum aliquid digne, vos videritis. Verum non omnia possumus praesenti sermone coarctare, fastidium evitantes.

He alone is born of a virgin alone, and the humanized divinity seals the womb of the Virgin with a new and singular birth. Where now is the eloquent indeed, but sterile loquacity of Aristotelian subtlety? If she brought forth, did she lie with a man? Whether it will or not, privation is turned into a habit, nor is the Terminator of all things bound by dialectical terms, at whose command nature brings forth and custom grows unusual. He goes forth also with clarity. For as He is born, all that luminous serenity of the starry lights is buried, and a brighter star, pre-sparkling with clearer rays, snatches for itself the whole position of the sky. Kings walk in the splendor of His rising (Isai. LX), for behold the kings are gathered together, they have come together as one. They themselves, seeing God and man thus being born, and a mother and Virgin bringing forth, were amazed, they were troubled, they were moved, trembling took hold of them (Psal. XLVII) in the light of such great miracles. He goes forth also with poverty, because wrapped in the cheapest swaddling clothes and reclined in the hardest manger (Luke II), even then He prefigured the law of martyrdom for His most holy limbs. He goes forth secretly, because that most subtle investigator of frauds is excluded from the height of such great condescension. Hence it is that, fatigued by ambiguous altercations, he now tempts Him, now calls the tempted one the Son of the Most High, now prepares the cross, now destroys it, with commands through the woman, his accustomed instrument: "Have nothing to do with that just man (Matth. XXVII)."

There follows: "To water the entire surface of the earth." To expiate the earthly misery which that first sinner had left to us as an inheritance. I wish that the Apostle would here distribute Him for me into four heads, just as above, because I receive his exposition more securely. "Who was made for us," he says, "wisdom, justice, sanctification, and redemption (I Cor. I)." Coming indeed to us, who were in prison, He first of all dispelled the darkness of our ignorance by the light of His wisdom, then through the justice which is from faith (Rom. X), He loosed the ropes of our sins, sanctifying us in His body, redeeming us in the passion of His body. "For the Lord looses those who are bound, the Lord illuminates the blind (Psal. CXLV); He sanctifies His tabernacle (Psal. XLV); He redeemed from the hand of the enemy (Psal. CV)." He is divided also into patience, by which He sustains sinners; into mercy, by which He cherishes the penitent; into largesse, by which He exalts those who profit; into fortitude, by which He preserves those who are exalted. Concerning this second quaternary I have conversed with your fraternity throughout this whole Advent, interweaving moral things with mystical ones through the course of the rivers and the interpretation of names; whether anything was done worthily, you shall see. But we cannot compress everything into the present sermon, avoiding weariness.

Ego habeo quatuor capita dulciora prioribus, quae fortassis vestris cordibus suavius complacebunt. Dominus enim noster elevatus in cruce, largissimas sanguinis undas a quatuor sui corporis partibus abundantius emisit. Spinis enim pungentibus sanctissimum caput nivea cervice reflexum, et clavis pedes et manus, et lancea latus ejus transverberantibus, pretiosus sanguis emicuit, cujus aspersione judex transivit in patrem, iratus in mitem, in misericordiam virga, captivitas in coronam. Christus ergo fons latens, et occultus in coelis; fons patens, et apertus in terris. Illic de utero Patris, hic egreditur de utero Virginis. Illic vivens terram irrigat viventium, hic moriens terram morientium. Illic dividitur in quaternarium admirabilem; hic in dulcem. Dulcis Dominus, dulcis domina, quia ille Deus meus misericordia mea, haec domina mea misericordiae porta. Ducat nos mater ad Filium, filia ad Patrem, sponsa ad sponsum, qui est benedictus in saecula. Amen.

Sermo XII

DE RESURRECTIONE DOMINI. (XXVII MART.)

Super illud psal. II: Postulavi Patrem meum, dedit mihi gentes. Alleluia.

Si consulamus adjutorium [f., auditorium] jurisperitorum, primum capituli propositi verbum sic describitur: postulare est desiderium suum, vel amici sui in jure apud eum, qui jurisdictioni praeest, exponere, vel alterius desiderio contradicere. Actus iste publicus est, et est officium advocatorum, qui gloriosae vocis confisi munimine, lapsa erigunt, fatigata reparant, nec minus provident humano generi quam si clypeis et thoracibus sese patriamque defendant.

In exsequendo actu isto attendere debemus qui postulet, quem, ubi, et quid postulet. Advocatus postulat judicem in jure rem suam, vel sibi postulat, actione proposita. In negotio praesenti advocatus est Christus; judex Deus Pater; et locus juris patibulum crucis; res postulata Ecclesia de gentibus; nomen actionis, petitio haereditatis. Recte Jesum Christum dicimus advocatum. Unde Joannes: «Si quis peccaverit, advocatum habemus apud Patrem Dominum Jesum Christum; ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris (I Joan. II).»

I have four heads sweeter than the previous ones, which perhaps will more pleasantly please your hearts. For our Lord, lifted up on the cross, most generously sent forth streams of blood from four parts of His body. For with thorns piercing His most holy head with its snowy neck bent back, and with nails through His feet and hands, and a lance transfixing His side, the precious blood gushed forth, by whose sprinkling the judge passed into a father, the angry into the mild, the rod into mercy, captivity into a crown. Christ, therefore, is a fountain hidden and occult in the heavens; a fountain patent and open on earth. There from the womb of the Father, here He goes forth from the womb of the Virgin. There living He waters the land of the living, here dying the land of the dying. There He is divided into an admirable quaternary; here into a sweet one. Sweet Lord, sweet lady, because He is my God my mercy, she my lady the gate of mercy. May the mother lead us to the Son, the daughter to the Father, the bride to the bridegroom, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Sermon XII

ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD. (MARCH 27)

On that of Psalm II: I have asked my Father, and He gave me the nations. Alleluia.

If we consult the aid [f., auditorium] of legal experts, the first word of the proposed chapter is thus described: to petition is to set forth one's own desire or that of one's friend in law before him who presides over the jurisdiction, or to contradict the desire of another. This act is public, and it is the office of advocates, who, relying on the protection of a glorious voice, raise up the fallen, repair the fatigued, and provide no less for the human race than if they defended themselves and their country with shields and breastplates.

In executing this act we ought to attend to who petitions, whom, where, and what he petitions. An advocate petitions a judge in law for his own thing, or petitions for himself, an action having been proposed. In the present business the advocate is Christ; the judge is God the Father; and the place of law is the gibbet of the cross; the thing petitioned is the Church from the nations; the name of the action is the petition for the inheritance. Rightly we call Jesus Christ an advocate. Whence John: "If anyone has sinned, we have an advocate with the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ; He is the propitiation for our sins (I John II)."

Advocatus iste apud Patrem desiderium suum exposuit, quando pro salute humani generis oblatus est, quia ipse voluit (Isa. LIII). Desiderium ejus est salus nostra, quam in cruce sitiens usque in finem suos legitur dilexisse (Joan. XIII). Sed et hoc desiderium amicorum fuit, quibus dixit: «Jam non dicam vos servos, sed amicos, quia servus nescit quid faciat dominus ejus. Vos autem dixi amicos, quia omnia quae audivi a Patre meo nota feci vobis (Joan. XV).» Item: «Majorem charitatem nemo habet, quam ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis (Ibid.).» Convenienter Patrem postulat qui semper exauditus est. Nam et vulgo et vulgariter dicitur: Securus vadit ad placitum qui patrem habet judicem. De eo namque Pater dixit: «Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui (Matth. III et XVII).» Nam cum Filius ejusdem substantiae sit cum Patre, in natura quidem humana, quam sibi personaliter univit, postulat pro nobis, vel allegat propitium judicem, et fructum reportat desiderii sui. Nec incongrue Patrem dicimus, cum in persona Filii Propheta dicat: «Judica, Domine, nocentes me, expugna impugnantes me (Psal. XXXIV).» Et ipse Filius: «Non quaero gloriam meam; est qui quaerat, et judicet (Joan. VIII).»

In plerisque sacrae Scripturae locis ordo quidam judiciorum ab ipso Deo institui videtur et servari. Quidam vir simplex, et rectus ac timens Deum, cum expleto officio matutino egrederetur ex ecclesia, et a discipulis rogaretur: Quid audisti in ecclesia, pater? Respondit: Quatuor audivi, sex notavi. Subtilis plane responsio fuit et fidelis. Quatuor namque versiculos Psalmi decimi octavi audierat, scilicet: «Lex Domini immaculata convertens animas (Psal. CXVIII),» et tres alios, qui sequuntur, in quibus sex notantur, quae sunt: lex, testimonium, justitia, praeceptum, timor, judicia. In his partim personae, quae in jure sunt necessariae, partim actus eorum exprimuntur. Nam et Dominus, qui judex est, et lex, secundum quam judicatur, et officium testium sub hoc nomine, testimonium, actoris quoque et rei merita per hoc nomen, justitiae, designantur. Nam et merita causarum partium assertione panduntur. Sententia judicis sub hoc nomine, praeceptum; accusatoris et exsecutoris officia, duobus ultimis nominibus, quae sunt, timor et judicia, indicantur. Quinque priora binis accedentibus innituntur, sextum quadrinis: «Lex Domini immaculata convertens animas.

This advocate set forth His desire before the Father when He was offered for the salvation of the human race, because He Himself willed it (Isa. LIII). His desire is our salvation, which thirsting for on the cross, He is read to have loved His own unto the end (John XIII). But also this was the desire of His friends, to whom He said: "Now I will not call you servants, but friends, because the servant knows not what his lord does. But I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you (John XV)." Likewise: "Greater love no man has, than that a man lay down his life for his friends (Ibid.)." Fittingly He petitions the Father who was always heard. For it is said both commonly and vulgarly: He goes securely to the plea who has a father as judge. For concerning Him the Father said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matth. III and XVII)." For since the Son is of the same substance with the Father, in the human nature indeed, which He united to Himself personally, He petitions for us, or alleges the propitious judge, and brings back the fruit of His desire. Nor incongruously do we call Him Father, when in the person of the Son the Prophet says: "Judge, O Lord, those who harm me, fight against those who fight against me (Psal. XXXIV)." And the Son Himself: "I do not seek my glory; there is one who seeks and judges (John VIII)."

In many places of holy Scripture a certain order of judgments seems to be instituted and preserved by God Himself. A certain simple and upright man, fearing God, when he went out from the church after the morning office had been completed, and was asked by his disciples: "What did you hear in the church, father?" He responded: "I heard four, I noted six." This was clearly a subtle and faithful response. For he had heard four verses of the eighteenth Psalm, namely: "The law of the Lord is immaculate, converting souls (Psal. XVIII)," and three others which follow, in which six things are noted, which are: law, testimony, justice, precept, fear, judgments. In these are expressed partly the persons who are necessary in law, partly their acts. For the Lord, who is the judge, and the law, according to which it is judged, and the office of witnesses under this name, testimony, and the merits of the actor and the thing are designated by this name, justice. For the merits of causes are opened by the assertion of the parties. The sentence of the judge under this name, precept; the offices of the accuser and the executor are indicated by the last two names, which are fear and judgments. The first five rest upon two accompanying things, the sixth upon four: "The law of the Lord is immaculate, converting souls.

Testimonium Domini fidele, sapientiam praestans parvulis. Justitiae Domini rectae, laetificantes corda. Praeceptum Domini lucidum, illuminans oculos. Timor Domini sanctus permanens in saeculum saeculi. Judicia Domini vera justificata in semetipsa. Desiderabilia super aurum, et lapidem pretiosum multum, et dulciora super mel et favum (Ibid.).» Praefata sane Domini dicuntur esse. Est enim lex, quae non est Domini, ut peccati, de qua dicit Apostolus: «Video aliam legem in membris meis, repugnantem legi mentis meae et captivantem me in lege peccati, quae est in membris meis (Rom. VII).» Sunt et justitiae humanae, de quibus dicitur: «Omnes justitiae nostrae tanquam pannus menstruatae (Isai. LXIV).» Sunt et praecepta humana, quibus Petrus obediendum non esse dicit: «Obedire, inquiens, oportet magis Deo quam hominibus (Act. V).» Timor quippe humanus a Domino reprobatur. Unde ait: «Nolite timere eos qui occidunt corpus, animam autem non possunt occidere (Matth. X).»

In propositis autem versiculis omnia dicuntur esse Dei. Primum, scilicet lex bina habet accidentia, quae sunt immaculata; convertens animas, sive de lege intelligas naturali, vel scripta, seu lege gratiae. Unicuique enim harum trium legum, scilicet naturali, scriptae et legi gratiae haec duo conveniunt. Nam immaculata debet esse et convertens animas. Naturalis lex haec duo habebat praecepta. «Quod tibi fieri non vis, alii ne feceris; et quod tibi vis fieri, alii facias (Tob. IV).» Quae sunt non obesse, et prodesse. Et hoc quantum ad primum, scilicet immaculata; quantum ad secundum, «convertens animas.» In primo non malefica, in secundo benefica; in primo sine macula malitiae, in secundo convertens animas ad mansuetudinem benevolentiae. Nam cum tres naturales potentiae insint animae, scilicet, ira, ratio, concupiscentia, concupiscentia data est, ut movearis ad appetendum quae tibi licita sunt; ita ad indignandum contra ea quae illicita sunt; ratio data est in medium cohibens et dirigens utrumque, ne ita ultra terminos irae moveatur, et ne concupiscentia appetat illicita. Itaque lex naturalis, quantum in se est, est immaculata. Lex quoque scripta immaculata est et convertens animas. Immaculata, id est, sine sordibus idololatriae, convertens animas ad serviendum Deo; quod tantum filii Israel faciebant. Lex autem gratiae revera est immaculata et convertens animas. Nam et Ecclesia lege ducitur: Dicitur enim esse sine macula, et ruga (Ephes. V); sine macula criminis, sine ruga simulationis. Etiam lex evangelica est sine errore haeresis, convertens animas simpliciter, et directe sine figmento hypocrisis. Attendite gradus istos, quia prima lex est immaculata; secunda, magis; tertia maxime, sic et convertens animas.

The testimony of the Lord is faithful, providing wisdom to little ones. The justices of the Lord are right, gladdening hearts. The precept of the Lord is lucid, illuminating the eyes. The fear of the Lord is holy, remaining for ever and ever. The judgments of the Lord are true, justified in themselves. Desirable above gold and much precious stone, and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb (Ibid.)." These are truly said to be of the Lord. For there is a law which is not of the Lord, such as that of sin, of which the Apostle says: "I see another law in my members, repugnant to the law of my mind and captivating me in the law of sin, which is in my members (Rom. VII)." There are also human justices, of which it is said: "All our justices are like a menstruous rag (Isai. LXIV)." There are also human precepts, which Peter says ought not to be obeyed: "It behooves," he says, "to obey God rather than men (Acts V)." Human fear indeed is reproved by the Lord. Whence He says: "Do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul (Matth. X)."

In the proposed verses, however, all things are said to be of God. First, namely, the law has two accidents, which are immaculate; converting souls, whether you understand it of the natural law, or the written, or the law of grace. For to each of these three laws, namely the natural, the written, and the law of grace, these two agree. For it ought to be immaculate and converting souls. The natural law had these two precepts. "What you do not wish to be done to you, do not do to another; and what you wish to be done to you, do to another (Tob. IV)." Which are not to harm, and to profit. And this as much as to the first, namely immaculate; as much as to the second, "converting souls." In the first not harmful, in the second beneficial; in the first without the stain of malice, in the second converting souls to the mildness of benevolence. For since three natural powers are in the soul, namely, anger, reason, concupiscence; concupiscence was given so that you might be moved to desiring those things which are licit to you; likewise to indignation against those things which are illicit; reason was given in the middle, restraining and directing both, lest it be moved so much beyond the limits of anger, and lest concupiscence desire illicit things. Therefore the natural law, as much as is in itself, is immaculate. The written law also is immaculate and converting souls. Immaculate, that is, without the filth of idolatry, converting souls to serving God; which only the children of Israel did. But the law of grace is truly immaculate and converting souls. For even the Church is led by the law: for she is said to be without stain and wrinkle (Ephes. V); without the stain of crime, without the wrinkle of simulation. Also the evangelical law is without the error of heresy, converting souls simply and directly without the figment of hypocrisy. Attend to these steps, because the first law is immaculate; the second, more so; the third, most of all, and so also converting souls.

Testimonium Domini bina habet accidentia, scilicet fidele sapientiam praestans parvulis. Testimonium Domini dicitur, quaecunque in scriptis sanctis testificatur Dominus, aut promittens aut praecipiens. Continentur itaque testimonia in promissis et praeceptis, quia quae promittit, solvit sive justis praemia, sive injutis tormenta. Sapientiam praestans parvulis, in quantum est praecipiens; quia qui parvuli sunt scientia, ex praeceptis Domini redduntur sapientes, ut ibi ostenditur: «A mandatis tuis intellexi.» Est itaque fidele testimonium Domini in explanatione praeceptorum ejus. In primo intellige promissiones et comminationes; in secundo prohibitiones. Fidele est, promittens et comminans; sapientiam praestans parvulis, prohibens et praecipiens.

Justitiae Domini binis convertuntur accidentibus, quae sunt, rectae, laetificantes corda. Justitiae Domini, opera justorum: unde et ipsi justi appellantur. Sed dicuntur esse Domini, quia, «omne datum optimum et omne donum perfectum de sursum est, descendens a Patre luminum (Jac. I).» Quid enim habes, o homo, quod non accepisti? (I Cor. IV). Item: «Gratia Dei sum id quod sum (I Cor. XV).» Ea autem opera justitiae appellari possunt, quae fide nascuntur et dilectione consummantur. Nam sicut sine fide impossibile est quemquam placere Deo (Hebr. II), ita et fides sine operibus mortua est (Jac. II). Fides autem, quae per dilectionem operatur, et proficit et sufficit ad salutem. Hae sunt justitiae Domini rectae, laetificantes corda per serenam conscientiam.

Praeceptum binis gaudet accidentibus. Est enim lucidum, illuminans oculos ex sui doctrina. Sunt quippe quaedam lucida, et non illuminantia; ut carbo sine flamma lucidus est, non tamen illuminat. Flamma sine carbone et lucet et illuminat. Praeceptum Domini lucidum est sine confusione sententiarum; illuminat oculos ex infusione gratiarum. Unde illud: «Lucerna pedibus meis verbum tuum, et lumen semitis meis (Psal. CXVIII).» Et beatus Petrus: «Cui benefacitis, inquit, attendentes tanquam lucernae lucenti in caliginoso loco (II Petr. I).» Singulariter autem ponitur praeceptum, quamvis multa sint praecepta: quia, ut ait Gregorius (Hom. 27 in Evangel.). Praeceptum Domini et unum est, et multa sunt; multa propter diversitatem operis; unum in radice charitatis.

«Timor Domini sanctus permanens in saeculum saeculi (Psal. CX).» Excluso humano timore, hic notatur filialis, sive castus.

In hoc, quod dicitur: timor Domini sanctus, intelligitur castus; et est initium sapientiae timor Domini.

Quod autem dicitur: permanens in saeculum saeculi, filialem designat.

The testimony of the Lord has two accidents, namely faithful and providing wisdom to little ones. Whatever the Lord testifies in the holy writings, either promising or commanding, is called the testimony of the Lord. Therefore testimonies are contained in promises and precepts, because what He promises, He fulfills, whether rewards to the just or torments to the unjust. Providing wisdom to little ones, in as much as it is commanding; because those who are little in knowledge are rendered wise from the precepts of the Lord, as is shown there: "From your mandates I have understood." There is therefore a faithful testimony of the Lord in the explanation of His precepts. In the first understand promises and threats; in the second prohibitions. He is faithful, promising and threatening; providing wisdom to little ones, prohibiting and commanding.

The justices of the Lord are converted by two accidents, which are right, gladdening hearts. The justices of the Lord are the works of the just: whence they themselves are called just. But they are said to be of the Lord because, "every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, descending from the Father of lights (James I)." For what do you have, O man, that you have not received? (I Cor. IV). Likewise: "By the grace of God I am what I am (I Cor. XV)." Those works, moreover, can be called of justice which are born from faith and are consummated by love. For just as without faith it is impossible for anyone to please God (Hebr. II [XI]), so also faith without works is dead (James II). Faith, however, which works through love, both profits and suffices for salvation. These are the justices of the Lord, right, gladdening hearts through a clear conscience.

The precept rejoices in two accidents. For it is lucid, illuminating the eyes from its doctrine. There are indeed some things that are lucid and not illuminating; as a coal without a flame is lucid, yet it does not illuminate. A flame without a coal both shines and illuminates. The precept of the Lord is lucid without the confusion of sentences; it illuminates the eyes from the infusion of graces. Whence that: "Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths (Psal. CXVIII)." And blessed Peter: "To whom you do well," he says, "attending as to a lamp shining in a dark place (II Peter I)." Singularly, moreover, the precept is placed, although there are many precepts: because, as Gregory says (Hom. 27 on the Gospel). The precept of the Lord is both one and many; many because of the diversity of the work; one in the root of charity.

"The fear of the Lord is holy, remaining for ever and ever (Psal. CX)." Human fear being excluded, here filial or chaste fear is noted.

In this, that it is called "the fear of the Lord is holy," chaste is understood; and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

That which is called "remaining for ever and ever" designates filial fear.

Judicia vero Domini suo quaternario vehuntur. Sunt vera, justificata in semetipsa, desiderabilia super aurum et lapidem pretiosum multum, dulciora super mel, et favum. Judicia Domini sunt retributiones, quibus vel reprobos punit, vel justos remunerat. Ea quamvis sint saepe occulta, semper tamen vera sunt; et justa, veritatem justi judicis sequentia. Sunt justificata in semetipsa, non sicut humana judicia, quae aliunde formantur, sicut ex allegationibus advocatorum, et ex depositionibus testium et recitationibus instrumentorum. Unde et per hoc saepe falluntur judices, et quamvis ordo judiciarius servetur, nonnunquam tamen innocens condemnatur, et nocens absolvitur. Judicia autem Dei ex semetipsis justificationem accipiunt, sicut per prophetam dicitur: «Non secundum visionem oculorum judicabit, nec secundum auditum aurium arguet, sed judicabit in justitia pauperes, et arguet in aequitate pro mansuetis terrae (Isai. XI).» Sunt autem desiderabilia, id est, desiderari dignissima super divitias et delicias. In auro et lapide pretioso intellige divitias; in melle, et favum delicias. Divitiae autem maxime intelliguntur in pecunia et potentia. Per lapidem pretiosum, quo potentes et nobiles utuntur, gloria potentiae. Porro divitiae aliae cum difficultate acquiruntur, aliae sine difficultate. In melle, quod liquidum est deliciae, et voluptates sine labore. In favo, quod mel et ceram continet simul, voluptates cum difficultate.

Ecce quidam ludus judiciarius occurrit nobis in Scripturis Deum Patrem repraesentans. Locus juris, in quo Advocatus noster postulat, patibulum crucis fuit. Cum enim ex officio suo advocati habeant stare, ipse non stans, sed toto corpore extenso in ligno crucis, apud Patrem pro nobis allegavit, desiderium suum et amicorum suorum exponens, et adversarii desiderio contradicens usque ad proprii sanguinis effusionem. Rem suam postulat, id est genus humanum, quod ipse creavit, cujus verum dominium habebat. Ecclesiam de gentibus converti postulavit, tanquam proprius haeres haereditatis petitionem proponens, et in possessionem de jure mitti desiderans. Petitio autem haereditatis ex ordine et regulari jure proponitur adversus cum qui possidet pro haerede, vel possessore. Pro haerede possidet qui dicit se haeredem esse, cum non sit; pro possessore possidet quis, cum nullo titulo potest tueri suam possessionem, qui, si requiratur quare possideat, nullam aliam causam allegat, nisi quia sic possideo. Recte autem proposuit Dominus noster adversus diabolum, qui haereditatem Domini pro possessore possidebat malignus praedo. De quo propheta: «Vae qui praedaris, nonne ipse praedaberis? (Isai. XXXIII)»

The judgments of the Lord indeed are carried by their own quaternary. They are true, justified in themselves, desirable above gold and much precious stone, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. The judgments of the Lord are retributions, by which He either punishes the reprobate or rewards the just. These, although they are often hidden, are nevertheless always true; and just, following the truth of the just judge. They are justified in themselves, not like human judgments, which are formed from elsewhere, such as from the allegations of advocates, and from the depositions of witnesses and the recitations of instruments. Whence also through this judges are often deceived, and although the judicial order is preserved, nevertheless sometimes the innocent is condemned and the guilty is absolved. But the judgments of God receive justification from themselves, as is said through the prophet: "Not according to the vision of the eyes shall He judge, nor according to the hearing of the ears shall He reprove, but He shall judge the poor in justice, and reprove in equity for the mild of the earth (Isai. XI)." They are, moreover, desirable, that is, most worthy to be desired above riches and delights. In gold and precious stone understand riches; in honey and the honeycomb delights. Riches, moreover, are understood especially in money and power. Through the precious stone, which the powerful and noble use, the glory of power. Furthermore, some riches are acquired with difficulty, others without difficulty. In honey, which is liquid, delights and pleasures without labor. In the honeycomb, which contains honey and wax together, pleasures with difficulty.

Behold, a certain judicial play occurs to us in the Scriptures representing God the Father. The place of law, in which our Advocate petitions, was the gibbet of the cross. For since by their office advocates have to stand, He, not standing, but with His whole body extended on the wood of the cross, alleged before the Father for us, setting forth His desire and that of His friends, and contradicting the desire of the adversary even unto the effusion of His own blood. He petitions for His own thing, that is the human race, which He Himself created, of which He had the true lordship. He petitioned that the Church from the nations be converted, setting forth as the proper heir the petition for the inheritance, and desiring to be sent into possession by right. Moreover, the petition for the inheritance is set forth from order and regular law against him who possesses as heir or as possessor. He possesses as heir who says that he is the heir, when he is not; one possesses as possessor when he can protect his possession by no title, who, if he be asked why he possesses, alleges no other cause except "because I thus possess." Rightly, however, our Lord set forth against the devil, who as a malignant plunderer was possessing the inheritance of the Lord as possessor. Concerning whom the prophet: "Woe to you who plunder, shall not you yourself be plundered? (Isai. XXXIII)"

In hac advocatione, sive postulatione Advocati nostri maxime gaudet Ecclesia die resurrectionis Dominicae, quia Advocatus postulavit, quia postulata impetravit, quia impetrata obtinuit et possedit. Inde est quod tripliciter laudem subjungit. Introducens enim Filium loquentem ad Patrem, et dicentem: «Postulavi Patrem meum; Ecclesia respondet: Alleluia,» id est, Deo laudes, quia postulasti. Item: «Dedit mihi gentes.» Et respondet Ecclesia: «Alleluia;» id est, Deo laudes, quia impetrasti. Item: «In haereditatem mihi (Psal. II).» Respondet: «Alleluia;» quia obtinuisti et possedisti.

Consociemur igitur et nos in hanc laudem universalis Ecclesiae, ut cum electis in haereditatem Domini intraturi, ad resurrectionem Domini pervenire valeamus perpetuo gavisuri. Quod ipse praestare dignetur qui vivit et regnat per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

APRILIS. XXIII. Sermo de S. Georgio martyre. XXV. Sermo I de S. Marco evangelista. Sermo II de eodem. Sermo III de eodem. XXVIII. Sermo I de S. Vitale martyre Sermo II de eodem.

Sermo XIII.

DE S. GEORGIO MARTYRE. (XXIII APR.)

Hodierna festivitas, dilectissimi, paschalis gloriae laetitiam geminat, et velut pretiosa gemma aurum, cui imprimitur, decore proprii splendoris illustrat. Apte nimirum hoc potissimum tempore beato Georgio concessum est triumphare, quando, transacta hiemalis inclementia turbinis, austri fomite resoluto, laeta terra alacriter parturit, et erumpentibus diversis herbarum atque arborum floribus, tanquam adolescente, ut ita loquar, aetate pubescit. Georgius siquidem Graece, terrae cultor Latino sonat eloquio, qui nimirum, juxta sui praesagium nominis, non modo suae mentis agrum spiritualis exercitii disciplinis excoluit, sed et sanctae exhortationis et piae correptionis vomere terrena multorum corda proscidit, vitiorumque vepribus erutis, fecunda in eis virtutum arbusta plantavit.

Merito igitur hodie beati hujus martyris anima post cruentam furiosi principis rabiem, post carnificum feraliter saevientium immanitatem, post dilacerati corporis exquisita supplicia, post ignis, ac ferri, picis, et sulphuris iniqua tormenta, post verberum denique plagas, post carcerum tenebras, tanquam post hibernas furentium ventorum niviumque procellas, oraculum hoc divinae meruit vocationis audire: «Veni, inquit, columba mea, sponsa mea, formosa mea; jam hiems transiit, imber abiit, et recessit; flores apparuerunt in terra nostra; tempus putationis advenit (Cant. II).»

In this advocacy or petition of our Advocate, the Church especially rejoices on the day of the Lord's resurrection, because the Advocate petitioned, because He impetrated the things petitioned, because He obtained and possessed the things impetrated. Hence it is that she subjoins praise in a threefold way. For introducing the Son speaking to the Father and saying: "I have petitioned my Father," the Church responds: "Alleluia," that is, "Praise to God," because You have petitioned. Likewise: "He gave me the nations." And the Church responds: "Alleluia," that is, "Praise to God," because You have impetrated. Likewise: "For an inheritance to me (Psal. II)." She responds: "Alleluia," because You have obtained and possessed.

Let us therefore also be associated in this praise of the universal Church, so that entering with the elect into the inheritance of the Lord, we may be able to arrive at the resurrection of the Lord, to rejoice perpetually. Which may He Himself deign to grant, who lives and reigns through all ages of ages. Amen.

APRIL. XXIII. Sermon on St. George the martyr. XXV. Sermon I on St. Mark the evangelist. Sermon II on the same. Sermon III on the same. XXVIII. Sermon I on St. Vitalis the martyr Sermon II on the same.

Sermon XIII.

ON ST. GEORGE THE MARTYR. (APRIL 23)

Today's festivity, most beloved, doubles the joy of the Paschal glory, and like a precious gem gold, to which it is pressed, illustrates with the beauty of its own splendor. Fitly, indeed, at this most special time has it been granted to the blessed George to triumph, when, the inclemency of the winter whirlwind having passed, the fuel of the south wind being loosened, the joyful earth eagerly brings forth, and with the various flowers of herbs and trees breaking out, it grows youthful, so to speak, as if with adolescent age. For George in Greek sounds as "cultivator of the earth" in Latin speech, who indeed, according to the presage of his name, not only cultivated the field of his own mind with the disciplines of spiritual exercise, but also with the plowshare of holy exhortation and pious correction plowed the earthly hearts of many, and having uprooted the briars of vices, planted in them fruitful groves of virtues.

Deservedly, therefore, today the soul of this blessed martyr, after the bloody rage of the furious prince, after the inhumanity of the executioners savagely raging, after the exquisite tortures of the lacerated body, after the unjust torments of fire, and iron, pitch, and sulfur, after finally the blows of scourges, after the darkness of prisons, as if after the winter storms of raging winds and snows, deserved to hear this oracle of divine vocation: "Come," it says, "my dove, my spouse, my beautiful one; now the winter has passed, the rain has gone and receded; flowers have appeared in our land; the time of pruning has arrived (Cant. II)."

Plane de militia translatus est in militiam, quia terreni tribunatus, quo fungebatur, officium Christianae militiae professione mutavit, et, ut revera strenuus miles prius omnia sua pauperibus tribuens, sarcinam terrenae facultatis abjecit; sicque liber, et expeditus, ac fidei lorica praecinctus in ipsam densi certaminis aciem fervidus se Christi bellator immersit, servato scilicet ordine, ut rerum pondus ante deponeret, atque ita postmodum ad campum certaminis imperterritus prosiliret.

Unde est quod in lege praecipitur, ut homo formidolosus, et corde pavido non egrediatur ab bellum, sed vadat, inquit, et revertatur ad terram suam, ne pavere faciat corda fratrum suorum, sicut et ipse perterritus est (Deut. XX). Quibus nimirum verbis liquido perdocemur quia pro defensione fidei dimicare fortiter et idonee nequeunt qui adhuc nudari terrenis opibus pertimescunt; tolerabiliusque est, ut domum quodammodo redeuntes ignobiliter et imbelles vivant, quam secum et alios a triumphandi gloria per degeneris exempla timoris avertant. Beatus vero Georgius sancti Spiritus igne succensus, et vexillo crucis inexpugnabiliter praemunitus, sic cum iniquo rege congressus est, ut et iniquorum omnium principem in satellite vinceret, et ad agendum fortiter Christi militum animos incitaret. Et quidem Diocletianus tunc imperator, sicut in descripta passionis ejus reperitur historia, cujus os, juxta Psalmistam, maledictione plenum erat, et amaritudine, et sub lingua ejus labor et dolor qui sedebat cum divitibus in occultis, ut interficeret innocentem, insidians quasi leo in spelunca sua (Psal. V), primo quasi vestimentum ovis subdolus induit, et sic quadam arte versutiae ac fucatis blandimentorum coloribus illum suadere tentavit. Sed cum insignis athleta Christi, spumantia ex antiqui serpentis ore venena contemneret, et non jam primi parentis originem, sed secundi potius in se vivere titulos demonstraret, protinus ille tanquam sagitta de Satanae pharetra prodiens, immanem lupum qui latebat aperuit, et ad inferenda diversa poenarum supplicia cruenta bestia feraliter ebullivit. Glomeratis itaque carnificibus beatus martyr extenditur, verberibus tunditur, duris caedibus laniatur. Dehinc rota gladiis armata profertur in medium, ut circum ligatum martyris corpus tanto crudelius quanto multiplicius perforetur.

Plainly he was translated from military service to military service, because he changed the office of the earthly tribunate, which he was performing, for the profession of Christian military service, and, as a truly strenuous soldier first bestowing all his things on the poor, he cast off the burden of earthly faculty; and thus free and unencumbered, and girded with the breastplate of faith, the fervent warrior of Christ immersed himself into the very line of the thick combat, the order having been observed, to be sure, that he would first lay down the weight of things, and so afterwards leap forth undaunted to the field of combat.

Whence it is that in the law it is commanded, that a man who is fearful and of a trembling heart should not go out to war, but let him go, it says, and return to his land, lest he make the hearts of his brothers to tremble, just as he himself is terrified (Deut. XX). By which words indeed we are clearly taught that those who still fear to be stripped of earthly riches cannot fight strongly and suitably for the defense of the faith; and it is more tolerable that, returning home in a certain way, they live ignobly and as cowards, than that they turn away others along with themselves from the glory of triumphing through examples of degenerate fear. But the blessed George, kindled with the fire of the Holy Spirit, and unassailably fortified with the standard of the cross, so engaged with the wicked king, that he both conquered the prince of all the wicked in his satellite, and incited the minds of the soldiers of Christ to act strongly. And indeed Diocletian, the emperor then, as is found in the history of his passion described, whose mouth, according to the Psalmist, was full of cursing and bitterness, and under his tongue labor and sorrow, who sat with the rich in secret places, that he might kill the innocent, lying in wait like a lion in his den (Psal. V), first as if a crafty sheep's clothing he put on, and so by a certain art of cunning and with feigned colors of flatteries he tried to persuade him. But when the distinguished athlete of Christ contemned the foaming poisons from the mouth of the ancient serpent, and demonstrated that not the origin of the first parent, but rather the titles of the second were living in him, immediately he, coming forth like an arrow from the quiver of Satan, opened the savage wolf that was hiding, and as a cruel beast he ferally boiled over to inflict diverse exquisite tortures of punishments. And so, the executioners being gathered, the blessed martyr is stretched out, beaten with scourges, torn by hard slaughters. Thence a wheel armed with swords is brought forth into the midst, so that the bound body of the martyr might be pierced so much more cruelly as it was more manifoldly.

Artifex nimirum feritas, nova et exquisita poenarum invenit argumenta, et ad satiandam sui furoris rabiem philosophatur in excedenda crudelitatis humanae mensura, ignorans scilicet quia pretiosum nitoris conspicui margaritum vivis utique supernae Hierusalem lapidibus inferendum, quanto asperioris limae scabredine vel mallei tunsione politur, tanto praeclarius redditur. Aderat plane supernus et invisibilis Arbiter, qui ad suae dispensationis arbitrium, et hinc manus impiorum saevire permitteret, et inde gemmam suam inviolata propriae soliditatis integritate servaret. Qui et si martyris sui membra carnificum manibus tradidit, animam tamen inexpugnabili fidei arce subnixam indefesso protectionis suae munimine custodivit. Nec ad hoc eos permisit attingere quod latebat, id solum eis objiciens quod extrinsecus apparebat; et tanquam aquae diluvii, arcam quidem undique circumfluere, nec tamen poterant intima penetrare (Gen. VII).

Dicat itaque beatus Georgius, dicat: «Nisi quia Dominus erat in nobis, cum insurgerent homines in nos, forsitan vivos deglutissent nos: cum irasceretur furor eorum adversum nos, forsitan velut aqua absorbuisset nos (Psal. CXXIII).» Haec sunt videlicet aquae, de quibus per Psalmistam Salvator ait: «Salvum me fac, Domine, quoniam intraverunt aquae usque ad animam meam (Psal. XI).» Et per Jonam: «Projecisti me, inquit, in profundum in corde maris, et flumen circumdedit me; omnes gurgites tui, et fluctus tui, super me transierunt (Jon. II).» Sed his aquis et mari, juxta Scripturam Dominus terminum circumposuit (Psal. CIII), quia secundum dispensationis suae mensuram, non secundum perversitatis humanae concupiscentiam, reprobos in electos suos saevire permittit.

Hinc est enim quod in mundi nascentis exordio mare Deus divisit ab arida (Gen. I). Quid enim per mysterium mare, nisi reprobos homines, et infideles insinuat, qui nimirum quadam carnalis ingenii salsugine callidi, sed odiis ac si multatibus invicem inveniuntur semper amari, et velut mare diversis tentationum flatibus intumescunt, cupiditatumque carnalium procellis ac tempestatibus quatiuntur? Quid vero arida, nisi animam designat fontem fidei sitientem, vel ad creatorem suum ardenti desiderio tanquam sitibundis faucibus anhelantem?

Indeed, the ferocity of the craftsman found new and exquisite arguments of punishments, and to satisfy the rage of his fury he philosophizes in exceeding the measure of human cruelty, being ignorant, of course, that the precious pearl of conspicuous brightness, to be inserted into the living stones of the heavenly Jerusalem, the more it is polished by the roughness of a harsher file or the pounding of a hammer, the more clearly it is rendered. Plainly the supernal and invisible Arbiter was present, who according to the judgment of His dispensation, would both here permit the hands of the impious to rage, and there keep His gem in the inviolate integrity of its own solidity. Who even if He delivered the members of His martyr to the hands of executioners, nevertheless guarded the soul, supported in the unassailable citadel of faith, with the untiring protection of His defense. Nor did He permit them to reach to that which was hidden, opposing to them only that which appeared outwardly; and like the waters of the flood, the ark indeed was flowing around on all sides, yet they could not penetrate the innermost parts (Gen. VII).

Let the blessed George say, therefore, let him say: "Unless the Lord had been in us, when men rose up against us, perhaps they would have swallowed us alive: when their fury was angry against us, perhaps as water it would have absorbed us (Psal. CXXIII)." These are clearly the waters of which the Savior says through the Psalmist: "Save me, Lord, for the waters have entered even unto my soul (Psal. XI)." And through Jonah: "You cast me," he says, "into the deep in the heart of the sea, and the river surrounded me; all your whirlpools and your waves have passed over me (Jon. II)." But to these waters and the sea, according to the Scripture, the Lord has set a boundary (Psal. CIII), because according to the measure of His dispensation, not according to the concupiscence of human perversity, He permits the reprobate to rage against His elect.

For hence it is that in the beginning of the nascent world God divided the sea from the dry land (Gen. I). For what does the sea signify through mystery, unless reprobate and infidel men, who indeed are always found bitter with a certain saltiness of carnal nature, but with hatreds and feuds among themselves, and like the sea they swell with diverse blasts of temptations, and are shaken by storms and tempests of carnal desires? But what does the dry land designate, unless the soul thirsting for the fountain of faith, or panting for its Creator with ardent desire as if with parched throat?

Unde et quaedam anima hac siti feliciter arida, aestuans clamavit: «Sitivit anima mea ad Deum vivum, quando veniam et apparebo ante faciem Dei? (Psal. XXXI.)» Ab arida ergo mare dividitur, quando Deus omnipotens a se sitientium reproborum impetus reprimit, et tanquam littus marinis fluctibus objicit, dum conatibus fervescentis insaniae sui moderaminis limitem figit. Quod profecto illa Dei vox probat, qua dicit: «Quis conclusit ostiis mare, quando erumpebat, quasi de vulva procedens? (Job XXXVIII.) Et paulo post: «Circumdedi illud terminis meis, et posui vectem, et ostia, et dixi: Usque huc venies, et non procedes amplius, et hic confringes tumentes fluctus tuos (Ibid.).» Enimvero recte per mare cor pravi hominis designatur, quod videlicet furore est turbidum, rixis amarum, elatione superbiae tumidum, caligine malitiosae fraudis obscurum. Separavit ergo tunc Deus mare et minaces fluctus ab inundatione terrae compescuit, ut terra virentes herbas et ligna pomifera germinaret, ac deinde segetum fructus afferret. Separat etiam nunc ab electis suis reproborum turbines persequentium et quasi furentes coercet impetus tempestatum, quos, et si furere usque ad infligenda corporibus tormenta concedit, ne tamen animas laedant, invicta eos atque pervigili brachii sui protectione custodit, quodammodo dicens mari: Huc usque venies, et non procedes amplius, et hic confringes tumentes fluctus tuos, ac si patenter dicat, usque ad inferenda corporibus te tormenta relaxo; ne autem usque ad animam cumulis intumescentibus profluas, legis meae tibi littus oppono, ut dum furori fluctuum tuorum littus objicitur, terra cordis ad proferenda fructuum germina libera relinquatur.

Et quia Georgius, ut superius diximus, terrae cultor exprimitur, recte hoc allegoricae figurae mysterium eidem beatissimo martyri coaptatur. Cui scilicet, et si usque ad littus carnis persecutionis fluctus efferbuit, solidissimam tamen animae ejus terram procella tempestuosi turbinis non involvit; nec eum vorago pelagi furentis absorbuit qui spei suae anchoram non in putris arenae subsicivio [succiduo], sed in soliditate petrae quae Christus est (I Cor. X), fixit. Hinc est profecto, quod Veritas ait: «Qui audit verba mea et facit ea, similabo eum viro prudenti, qui aedificavit domum suam supra petram. Venerunt flamina, flaverunt venti et impegerunt in domum illam, et non cecidit; fundata enim erat supra petram (Matth. VII, Luc. VI).» Vere insignis hic miles Christi supra petram fidei suae fundamenta constituit, qui praemii coelestis intuitu minas principum sprevit, male blandientium promissiones irrisit, carnificum tormenta contempsit, ferrum, ignes, gladios ac diversa suppliciorum genera invictae patientiae majestate calcavit.

Whence also a certain soul, happily dry with this thirst, cried out in its burning: "My soul has thirsted for the living God, when shall I come and appear before the face of God? (Psal. XXXI.)" Therefore the sea is divided from the dry land when almighty God represses from Himself the impetus of the thirsting reprobate, and as if a shore opposes the marine waves, while He fixes the limit of His moderation to the efforts of seething madness. Which indeed that voice of God proves, by which it says: "Who shut up the sea with doors, when it broke forth, as if proceeding from the womb? (Job XXXVIII.)" And a little after: "I surrounded it with my boundaries, and set a bar and doors, and I said: Hitherto you shall come, and shall proceed no further, and here you shall break your swelling waves (Ibid.)." Indeed, rightly by the sea is designated the heart of the wicked man, which to be sure is turbid with fury, bitter with strifes, swollen with the elation of pride, obscure with the darkness of malicious fraud. Therefore God then separated the sea and restrained the threatening waves from the inundation of the earth, so that the earth might bring forth green herbs and fruit-bearing trees, and then yield the fruits of the crops. He also now separates from His elect the whirlwinds of the reprobate persecutors and restrains the as if raging impetus of the tempests, whom, even if He permits to rage even to the inflicting of torments on bodies, nevertheless lest they harm the souls, He guards them with the unconquered and ever-watchful protection of His arm, saying in a certain way to the sea: Hitherto you shall come, and shall proceed no further, and here you shall break your swelling waves, as if He clearly says, I relax you even to the inflicting of torments on bodies; but lest you flow forth with swelling heaps even unto the soul, I oppose to you the shore of my law, so that while the shore is opposed to the fury of your waves, the earth of the heart may be left free to bring forth the buds of fruits.

And because George, as we said above, is expressed as a cultivator of the earth, rightly is this mystery of allegorical figure fitted to the same most blessed martyr. To whom, to be sure, even if the wave of persecution seethed up to the shore of the flesh, nevertheless the storm of the tempestuous whirlwind did not envelop the most solid earth of his soul; nor did the abyss of the raging sea absorb him who fixed the anchor of his hope not in the fall of rotten sand, but in the solidity of the rock which is Christ (I Cor. X). Hence it is indeed, that the Truth says: "He who hears my words and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. The floods came, the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it did not fall; for it was founded upon the rock (Matth. VII, Luc. VI)." Truly this distinguished soldier of Christ established the foundations of his faith upon the rock, who with the intuition of the heavenly reward spurned the threats of princes, mocked the promises of those evilly flattering, contemned the torments of executioners, trampled iron, fires, swords and diverse kinds of exquisite tortures with the majesty of unconquered patience.

Hunc coelestis militiae bellatorem, fratres charissimi, non tantum admiremur, sed etiam imitemur; in illud coelestis gloriae praemium jam spiritus erigatur, ut dum in ejus contemplatione cor figimus, non moveamur, utrum mundus lenocinator arrideat, an certe minax adversitatibus fremat, dicentes cum Psalmista: «Sicut tenebrae ejus, ita et lumen ejus (Psal. CXXXVIII).» Mundemus itaque nos, juxta Pauli praeceptum ab omni iniquinamento carnis et spiritus (II Cor. VII), ut in illud beatitudinis templum, cui nunc aciem mentis intendimus, quandoque etiam ingredi mereamur. Hinc est quod Aaron prius aqua lavatur, et sic postmodum tabernaculum sacrificaturus ingreditur (Exod. XXX). De quo nimirum bene ad Moysen divina voce praecipitur: «Tunica, inquit, vestietur, feminalibus lineis verenda celabit, accingetur zona linea, cidarim lineam imponet capiti. Haec enim vestimenta sunt sancta, quibus cum lotus fuerat, induetur (Lev. XVI).» Quisquis enim in tabernaculo Christi, quod est Ecclesia, semetipsum Deo sacrificare contendit, necesse est, ut postquam lavacro sacri fontis abluitur, diversis etiam virtutum vestibus induatur, sicut scriptum est: «Sacerdotes tui induantur justitiam (Psal. CXXXI),» quatenus qui in Christo per baptismum novo homo renascitur, non jam pelliceas tunicas, mortalitatis videlicet indices vestiat, sed deposito veteri homine novum induat, et in eo per mundae conversationis studium innovatus vivat. Et notandum quod omnes illae vestes lineae describuntur; linum quippe ad candorem cum labore perducitur, et virtutum vita non acquiritur sub torpore desidiae, sed in laboriosae potius exercitio disciplinae.

Purificati igitur, dilectissimi, per novi baptismatis sacramentum, induamur nos linea tunica, ut candor nos sanctae conversationis exornet. Feminalibus verenda tegantur, ut dum honestae vitae tegmen assumitur, praeteritorum criminum ante Dei oculos turpitudo celetur. Unde David: «Beati, inquit, quorum remissae sunt iniquitates, et quorum tecta sunt peccata (Psal. XXXI).» Zona insuper linea constringamur, capiti quoque cidaris imponatur, ut praecincti in veritate lumbos mentis, protegamur galea spe salutis. Sic, sic nimirum et veteris peccati squalore purgati, et novae conversationis nitore conspicui, digne celebramus paschale mysterium, et beatorum martyrum veraciter imitamur exemplum. Nec desperetis, fratres mei, licet adhuc infirmi, licet exterioribus fortassis adhuc actibus implicati, non desperetis ad martyrum vos consortium pertinere, qui martyrum victorias vos recognoscitis ex corde diligere.

This warrior of the heavenly military service, dearest brothers, let us not only admire, but also imitate; let the spirit now be raised into that reward of heavenly glory, so that while we fix the heart in its contemplation, we may not be moved, whether the world smile as a seducer, or certainly roar threatening with adversities, saying with the Psalmist: "As its darkness, so also its light (Psal. CXXXVIII)." Let us cleanse ourselves therefore, according to the precept of Paul, from all defilement of flesh and spirit (II Cor. VII), so that into that temple of beatitude, upon which we now intend the sharp edge of the mind, we may eventually also deserve to enter. Hence it is that Aaron is first washed with water, and so afterwards enters the tabernacle to sacrifice (Exod. XXX). Concerning which indeed it is well commanded to Moses by the divine voice: "With a tunic," it says, "he shall be clothed, he shall hide his shameful parts with linen breeches, he shall be girded with a linen belt, he shall put a linen miter upon his head. For these are holy garments, with which he shall be clothed after he had been washed (Lev. XVI)." For whoever in the tabernacle of Christ, which is the Church, strives to sacrifice himself to God, it is necessary that after he is washed by the washing of the sacred fountain, he be also clothed with diverse garments of virtues, as it is written: "Let your priests be clothed with justice (Psal. CXXXI)," so that he who in Christ is reborn through baptism as a new man, may no longer clothe himself in leather tunics, the indicators namely of mortality, but having put off the old man, may put on the new, and live in him innovated through the study of pure conversation. And it is to be noted that all those garments are described as of linen; for linen is brought to whiteness with labor, and the life of virtues is not acquired under the torpor of sloth, but rather in the exercise of laborious discipline.

Purified, therefore, most beloved, through the sacrament of the new baptism, let us put on the linen tunic, so that the brightness of holy conversation may adorn us. Let the shameful parts be covered with breeches, so that while the covering of an honest life is assumed, the turpitude of past crimes may be hidden before the eyes of God. Whence David: "Blessed," he says, "are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered (Psal. XXXI)." Moreover, let us be bound with a linen belt, and let a miter be put upon the head, so that having girded the loins of the mind in truth, we may be protected by the helmet of the hope of salvation. Thus, thus indeed, both purged from the squalor of old sin and conspicuous with the brightness of new conversation, we worthily celebrate the Paschal mystery, and truly imitate the example of the blessed martyrs. Nor do you despair, my brothers, although still weak, although perhaps still implicated in exterior acts, do not despair that you belong to the consortium of the martyrs, you who recognize that you love the victories of the martyrs from the heart.

Quinque certe Salphaad filiae inter fratres suos noscuntur haereditatem, Moyse constituente, sortitae (Num. XXVII et XXXVI); quinque nimirum et feminae, ut per quinarium numerum exterior occupatio, per muliebrem vero sexum infirmitas designetur. Jonathas quoque in quodam inter utrumque meditullio positus, nec cum Saul remansit in malis, nec David aequiparari potuit prorsus in bonis (I Reg. XVIII, XIX et XX). Sed quia dilecto Dei Prophetae fuit amicus, et de futuro ejus gavisus est fraterna benignitate successu, pie creditur ab ejus consortio nunc in spiritu non esse divisus, cui dum in carne viveret, unanimiter exstitit in amore conjunctus.

Nos autem, dilectissimi, qui exagitantem Saul spiritum malum, auxiliante Deo, post terga dimisimus (I Reg. XVI); imo qui Pharaonis exercitum in mari Rubro demersum (Exod. XVIII), per virtutem sacramenti paschalis evasimus, pro carnis tamen infirmitate adhuc versamur in eremo, transeamus ad vitae perfectionem, ad terram scilicet lacte et melle manantem. Egressi de Sodomis, non in Segor diutius immoremur sed liberati, cum Loth, montis verticem celeriter ascendamus (Gen. XIX) quatenus qui inter ipsa tirocinii rudimenta, jam beatorum martyrum coepimus gaudere triumphis, quandoque ad hoc etiam provehamur, ut discamus et ipsi triumphare cum sanctis. Et ipse sit fortitudo nostra dum protegit, qui factus est pretium, cum redemit, Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XIV.

I. DE S. MARCO EVANGELISTA. (XXV APR.)

Hodie, dilectissimi, velut pretiosus atque conspicuus coram oculis nostris auro radianti Beryllus imprimitur, dum illucescente beati evangelistae Marci solemnitate, paschale nobis gaudium geminatur. Et apte satis, dum sancta Ecclesia in festis adhuc paschalibus perseverat, beatus hic vir feliciter transiit: quia per martyrii palmam saeculum hoc triste deseruit, et triumphalis gloriae titulos hymnidicis angelorum choris victor laureatus invexit. Porro autem sicut quatuor flumina ex uno paradisi fonte procedunt, quae totius mundi partibus influunt, ita beati quatuor evangelistae de Christo, qui fons vitae, et origo est sapientiae, quasi totidem gurgites profluunt, et arentia humanorum cordium arva doctrina suae fluentis infundunt.

Certainly the five daughters of Zelophehad are known to have obtained an inheritance among their brothers, Moses establishing it (Num. XXVII and XXXVI); five indeed and women, so that through the fivefold number exterior occupation may be designated, and through the female sex weakness. Jonathan also, placed in a certain middle ground between both, neither remained with Saul in evils, nor could be altogether equated with David in goods (I Reg. XVIII, XIX and XX). But because he was a friend to the beloved Prophet of God, and rejoiced with brotherly kindness over his future success, it is piously believed that he is not now divided in spirit from his consortium, to whom while he lived in the flesh, he stood out as joined unanimously in love.

But we, most beloved, who having left the evil spirit agitating Saul behind our backs, with God's help (I Reg. XVI); nay, who have escaped Pharaoh's army drowned in the Red Sea (Exod. XVIII), through the virtue of the Paschal sacrament, yet on account of the infirmity of the flesh are still involved in the desert, let us pass to the perfection of life, namely to the land flowing with milk and honey. Having gone out from Sodom, let us no longer dwell in Zoar but having been liberated, with Lot, let us quickly ascend the top of the mountain (Gen. XIX) so that we who among the very rudiments of apprenticeship, have already begun to rejoice in the triumphs of the blessed martyrs, may eventually also be advanced to this, that we ourselves may learn to triumph with the saints. And may He Himself be our strength while He protects, who became the price when He redeemed, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ages of ages. Amen.

Sermon XIV.

I. ON ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST. (APRIL 25)

Today, most beloved, like a precious and conspicuous beryl in radiant gold is set before our eyes, while the solemnity of the blessed evangelist Mark dawning, the Paschal joy is doubled for us. And fitly enough, while the holy Church still perseveres in the Paschal feasts, this blessed man happily passed away: because through the palm of martyrdom he deserted this sad world, and as a laurelled victor he brought in the titles of triumphal glory with the hymn-singing choirs of angels. Furthermore, just as four rivers proceed from one fountain of paradise, which flow into the parts of the whole world, so the four blessed evangelists flow forth from Christ, who is the fountain of life and the origin of wisdom, as so many whirlpools, and water the parched fields of human hearts with the stream of their doctrine.

Unde vir Sapiens cum praemisisset: «Posuit David puero suo excitare regem ex ipso fortissimum, et in throno honoris sedentem in sempiternum;» praesto subjunxit: «Qui implet quasi Phison sapientiam, et sicut Tigris in diebus novorum, qui adimplet quasi Euphrates sensum, qui multiplicat quasi Jordanis in tempore messis, qui mittit disciplinam sicut lucem, et assistens quasi Gehon in die vindemiae (Eccli, XXIV)» Hinc etiam paulo post ait: «Ego sapientia effudi flumina; ego quasi trames aquae immensae de fluvio, ego quasi fluvius Dorix [Diorix], et sicut aquaeductus exivi de paradiso. Dixi: Rigabo meum hortum plantationum, et inebriabo patri mei fructum (Ibid.)» Christus itaque sapientia Patris, qui de paradiso per mysterium assumptae humanitatis exivit, hortum suum, id est, sanctam Ecclesiam, per quatuor evangelistas, tanquam per totidem coelestis doctrinae fluvios, irrigavit. Inter quos nimirum beatus Marcus velut Gehon perspicuus ac purus eructat, et humanas mentes salutiferi madoris inundatione fecundat. Qui, juxta Scripturae seriem, circuit omnem terram Aethiopiae (Gen. II). id est, universitatem complectitur Ecclesiae peccatis praecedentibus denigratae. De cujus Aethiopiae populo per prophetam Dominus dicit: «Ultra flumina Aethiopiae, inde supplices mei (Sophon. III).» Quae etiam persecutionibus praessa dicit in Canticis: «Nigra sum, sed formosa.» Et paulo post: «Nolite me considerare quod fusca sim, quia decoloravit me sol (Cant. I).» Sed eosdem sanctos evangelistas, quos Moyses flumina per typicae historiae seriem narrat: Ezechiel propheta sub diversorum animalium specie se vidisse pronuntiat: «Similitudo, inquit, vultus eorum facies hominis; et facies leonis a dextris ipsorum quatuor, et facies bovis a sinistris ipsorum quatuor, et facies aquilae desuper ipsorum quatuor (Ezech. I).» Inter quae videlicet animalia beatus Marcus secundo loco positus invenitur, quia leonis faciem habere describitur. Nam quia a clamore vocis in deserto suum incipit Evangelium, recte leonis sortitus est speciem. Sed si subtiliter ipsa Evangelii ejus origo perpenditur, ordinatissima sancti Spiritus in eo dispensatio reperitur. In hanc quippe vocem exorsus erupit: «Initium Evangelii Jesu Christi, Filii Dei (Marc. I).» Sicut scriptum est in Isaia propheta: «Ecce ego mitto angelum meum ante faciem tuam, qui praeparavit viam tuam ante te. Vox clamantis in deserto: Parate viam Domini, rectas facite semitas Dei nostri.» Matthaeus autem dicit: «Liber generationis Jesu Christi filii David (Matth. I).» Quid est ergo quod ille dicit, Filii Dei; iste, filii David, nisi quod per organa sua Spiritus sanctus mediatoris Dei et hominum sacramenta distinxit, ut per alterum eum Filium Dei, per alterum ostenderet esse filium hominis? Tanquam enim per unius tibiae duo spiramina, vel potius per duas Ecclesiae nares unus effluit spiritus, dum incarnati Verbi iste divinam, ille generationem describit humanam.

Whence the Wise man, when he had premised: "David set for his servant to raise up from him a most strong king, and one sitting on the throne of honor forever;" immediately subjoined: "Who fills up wisdom like Pishon, and like Tigris in the days of new fruits, who fulfills sense like Euphrates, who multiplies like Jordan in the time of harvest, who sends discipline like light, and assisting like Gihon in the day of vintage (Eccli. XXIV)." Hence also a little after he says: "I wisdom have poured out rivers; I as a path of immense water from the river, I as the river Diorix, and as an aqueduct I came out of paradise. I said: I will water my garden of plantings, and I will inebriate the fruit of my meadow (Ibid.)." Christ therefore, the wisdom of the Father, who came out of paradise through the mystery of the assumed humanity, watered His garden, that is, the holy Church, through the four evangelists, as through so many rivers of heavenly doctrine. Among whom indeed the blessed Mark as Gihon belches forth conspicuous and pure, and fecundates human minds with the inundation of health-giving moisture. Who, according to the series of the Scripture, encompasses all the land of Ethiopia (Gen. II), that is, he embraces the university of the Church blackened by preceding sins. Concerning the people of which Ethiopia the Lord says through the prophet: "Beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, thence are my suppliants (Sophon. III)." Who also, pressed by persecutions, says in the Canticles: "I am black, but beautiful." And a little after: "Do not consider me that I am dark, because the sun has discolored me (Cant. I)." But the same holy evangelists, whom Moses relates as rivers through the series of typical history: Ezekiel the prophet pronounces that he saw under the species of diverse animals: "The likeness of their faces," he says, "was the face of a man; and the face of a lion on the right of those four, and the face of an ox on the left of those four, and the face of an eagle above those four (Ezech. I)." Among which animals indeed the blessed Mark is found placed in the second place, because he is described as having the face of a lion. For because he begins his Gospel from the cry of the voice in the desert, he rightly obtained the species of a lion. But if that very origin of his Gospel is subtly weighed, a most orderly dispensation of the Holy Spirit is found in it. For he broke out beginning into this voice: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Marc. I)." As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "Behold I send my angel before your face, who shall prepare your way before you. The voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God." But Matthew says: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ the son of David (Matth. I)." What is it therefore that the former says, "of the Son of God"; the latter, "son of David", unless because through His organs the Holy Spirit distinguished the sacraments of the mediator of God and men, so that through the one He might show Him to be the Son of God, through the other the son of man? For as if through two breath-holes of one pipe, or rather through two nostrils of the Church, one spirit flows out, while the former describes the divine, the latter the human generation of the incarnate Word.

Sed movere potest, cur beatus evangelista Marcus, postquam positurum se Isaiae, verba promisit, non protinus Isaiae, sed Malachiae potius dicta subintulit, sicque postmodum ad Isaiae verba pervenit? Nam quod praemittitur: «Ecce mitto angelum meum (Mal. III),» Malachias protulit, qui novissimus est duodecim prophetarum. Quud autem subjungitur: «Vox clamantis in deserto (Isai. XL),» Isaiae est indubitanter oraculum. Cur ergo qui Isaiam promisit, non mox Isaiam reddidit, sed Malachiam in testimonium prius adduxit? Nunquid homo spiritu Dei plenus, praesertim in ipso suae narrationis exordio, vel errare potuit, vel mentiri; ut qui Veritatis gesta describeret, librum suum mendacio dedicasset? Sed hoc docendi magisterio factum est, ut in ipso Evangelii sui principio Spiritus sanctus, cujus ipse auctor erat, ostenderet se unum eumdemque per omnium prophetarum ora fuisse locutum, ut quod ab uno specialiter dicitur ab omnibus communiter proferatur.

Quidquid ergo dicit Malachias, dicit nihilominus et Isaias, et uniuscujusque verba per unitatem spiritus ab omnibus sunt prolata. In quo etiam illud beatus evangelista docet, ut si quid ipse loquitur, quod a caeteris evangelistis videatur esse diversum, unum tamen intelligantur omnes proferre sermonem per ejus, qui in omnibus loquitur, sancti Spiritus unitatem. Unde sicut in prophetis, sic etiam in evangelistis nequaquam scribentis hominis ministerio sit diversum quod una dictantis Spiritus est auctoritate prolatum. Enimvero quisquis Evangelium beati Marci subtili meditatione considerat, et alta, ut dignum est, indagatione pertractat, rudibus quidem et non accuratis descriptum verbis, sed uberrimis inveniet coelestis intelligentiae redundare mysteriis. Est plane styli brevitate succinctum, sed profunda mysterii spiritalis ubertate diffusum. Perscrutantes namque omnes fere paginas Scripturarum, invenire vix possumus spiritum veritatis cautius vel circumspectius per alium quemlibet quam per os beati Marci fuisse locutum, adeo ut ipsa descriptionis series, et ordo verborum magnum contineat sacramentum. Quod, ut facilius elucescat, in ipso libri ejus exordio nos breviter intimare non pigeat.

Primum namque miraculum ponit, quo Dominus daemonem per os hominis clamantem, tacere praecepit, eumque protinus expulit. «Obmutesce, inquit, et exi ab homine (Marc. I).» Secundum miraculum est, quo febricitantem socrum Petri, depulso typi calore, sanavit (Ibid.). Tertium est, quo leprosum tetigit et purgavit (Ibid.). Quartum quoque est, quo paralyticum grabbatum tollere et abire praecepit (Marc. II).

But it can be moved, why the blessed evangelist Mark, after he promised that he would set forth the words of Isaiah, did not immediately bring in the words of Isaiah, but rather the sayings of Malachi, and so afterwards arrived at the words of Isaiah? For that which is premised: "Behold I send my angel (Mal. III)," Malachi set forth, who is the last of the twelve prophets. But that which is subjoined: "The voice of one crying in the desert (Isai. XL)," is undoubtedly the oracle of Isaiah. Why therefore did he who promised Isaiah, not soon render Isaiah, but brought in Malachi first for testimony? Could a man full of the spirit of God, especially in the very beginning of his narration, either err or lie; so that he who described the deeds of Truth, would have dedicated his book to a lie? But this was done by the mastery of teaching, so that in the very beginning of his Gospel the Holy Spirit, of whom he himself was the author, might show that He Himself, one and the same, had spoken through the mouths of all the prophets, so that what is said by one specially is brought forth by all commonly.

Whatever therefore Malachi says, Isaiah nevertheless says as well, and the words of each one through the unity of the spirit were brought forth by all. In which also the blessed evangelist teaches this, that if he himself speaks anything which may seem to be different from the other evangelists, nevertheless all should be understood to bring forth one speech through the unity of the same Holy Spirit who speaks in all. Whence just as in the prophets, so also in the evangelists, by no means is that which was brought forth by the one authority of the dictating Spirit different by the ministry of the writing man. Indeed, whoever considers the Gospel of the blessed Mark with subtle meditation, and treats it, as is worthy, with deep investigation, will find it described with rude indeed and not accurate words, but redounding with the most fertile mysteries of heavenly intelligence. It is plainly succinct with brevity of style, but diffused with profound abundance of spiritual mystery. For searching almost all the pages of the Scriptures, we can hardly find the spirit of truth to have spoken more cautiously or circumspectly through any other than through the mouth of the blessed Mark, so much so that the very series of description and the order of words contains a great sacrament. Which, so that it may shine forth more easily, it should not irk us briefly to intimate in the very beginning of his book.

For first he sets the miracle by which the Lord commanded the demon crying out through the mouth of the man to be silent, and immediately expelled him. "Be silent," He says, "and go out of the man (Marc. I)." The second miracle is by which He healed the mother-in-law of Peter who was feverish, the heat of the type having been driven away (Ibid.). The third is by which He touched and cleansed the leper (Ibid.). The fourth also is by which He commanded the paralytic to take up his bed and go (Marc. II).

Qui videlicet ordo, si diligenti cura perpenditur, manifeste docet quanta magisterii arte Spiritus sanctus scribentis calamum tenuit, et ad declarandum redemptionis humanae mysterium, quasi per quamdam lineam, omnia dispensavit. In dejectione namque primi hominis principio diabolus locutus est, ac pomum vetitum comedi persuasit; deinde mulier, quia in delectationis concupiscentiam corruit, velut aestuantis ardorem febris incurrit. Adam vero postquam de fructu ligni male consentiendo gustavit (Gen. III), omnium mox vitiorum lepra perfusus; postremo etiam, tanquam paralyticus, a cunctis bonis operibus est interioris hominis languore constrictus. Quia ergo Filius Dei, sicut Joannes apostolus dicit, destruere venit opera diaboli (I Joan. III), per eamdem viam persecutus est mortem, qua illa ingressa fuerat in orbem terrarum. Ubi fuso est perditionis nostrae venenum, animarum medicus salutis objecit antidotum, atque unde mortem hostis callidus introduxit, per eumdem tramitem Redemptor noster redeuntis vitae primordia reformavit, quatenus et diabolum, qui in ruinam nostram locutus fuerat, jamjam tacere compelleret, et Evam a febribus aestuantis concupiscentiae liberaret, atque a viro non modo lepram vitiorum sceleramque detergeret, sed eumdem quoque eatenus paralyticum ad exercenda pietatis opera validum liberumque laxaret. Sicut ergo in illis primis hominibus totum periit genus humanum, sic in istis a Salvatore curatis est sub figurae mysterio saluti pristinae restitutum.

In capite igitur evangelici hujus libri studiosus lector addiscat sequentis styli series quam profunda, quam mystica charismatum sacramenta contineat. Nec mirum, cum liber ille non plus Marci quam Petri perhibeatur apostoli. Quidquid enim iste scripsit, ex ore beati magistri callidus, ut ita dixerim, explorator audivit. Fuit enim, sicut authentica historiarum tradit antiquitas, levita secundum carnis originem, sacerdos in Israel secundum ordinis dignitatem. Conversus ad fidem, factus est beati Petri in baptismate filius, atque in divino sermone discipulus. Evangelium in Italia, magistro nesciente, descripsit; descriptum vero ejus judicio reverenter obtulit. Qui, pium atque religiosum comperiens furtum gaudensque suum interpretem purissimam tenuisse fidem ac sincerissimam veritatem, auctoritatis robur attribuit, legendumque sanctae universali Ecclesiae delegavit. Postmodum vero vir apostolicus ad Aegyptum transiens per Lybiam Marmaricae et Ammoniacae fidei semen sparsit; Pentapoleos quoque gentilibus populis Christi Evangelium praedicavit. Amputasse sibi praeterea pollicem legitur, ut sacerdotio reprobus haberetur. Sed tantum in eo potuit praedestinata supernae dispensationis electio, ut ne sic quidem perderet in novae gratiae fide quod primitus obtinuisset in genere. Nam episcopus factus, Alexandrinam fundavit Ecclesiam eamque, postquam super petram, quae Christus est, insignis architectus erexit, glorioso magistri sui nomini fideliter dedicavit.

Which order, if it is weighed with diligent care, manifestly teaches with how much art of mastery the Holy Spirit held the pen of the writer, and to declare the mystery of human redemption, as if through a certain line, dispensed all things. For in the dejection of the first man, in the beginning the devil spoke, and persuaded that the forbidden fruit be eaten; then the woman, because she fell into the concupiscence of delight, incurred as it were the heat of a seething fever. But Adam, after he tasted of the fruit of the tree by evilly consenting (Gen. III), was soon covered with the leprosy of all vices; finally also, as a paralytic, he was constricted by the languor of the interior man from all good works. Because therefore the Son of God, as the apostle John says, came to destroy the works of the devil (I Joan. III), He followed death through the same way by which it had entered into the world. And where the poison of our perdition was poured out, the Physician of souls opposed the antidote of salvation, and from where the crafty enemy introduced death, through the same path our Redeemer reformed the beginnings of returning life, so that He would compel the devil, who had spoken to our ruin, already now to be silent, and would liberate Eve from the fevers of seething concupiscence, and from the man not only would wipe away the leprosy of vices and crimes, but also would release the same, hither-to a paralytic, strong and free for exercising works of piety. Just as therefore in those first men the whole human race perished, so in these healed by the Savior it was restored to its pristine salvation under the mystery of a figure.

In the head therefore of this evangelical book let the studious reader learn how profound, how mystical sacraments of charisms the series of the following style contains. Nor is it a wonder, since that book is perhibited no more of Mark than of Peter the apostle. For whatever the former wrote, he heard from the mouth of the blessed master as a crafty, so to speak, explorer. For he was, as the authentic antiquity of histories relates, a Levite according to the origin of the flesh, a priest in Israel according to the dignity of the order. Converted to the faith, he was made the son of the blessed Peter in baptism, and a disciple in the divine speech. He described the Gospel in Italy, his master not knowing; but he reverently offered it when described to his judgment. Who, finding the pious and religious theft and rejoicing that his interpreter had held the purest faith and most sincere truth, attributed the strength of authority, and delegated it to be read to the holy universal Church. But afterwards the apostolic man passing to Egypt through Libya scattered the seed of faith of Marmarica and Ammoniaca; he also preached the Gospel of Christ to the gentile peoples of Pentapolis. Furthermore he is read to have amputated his thumb, so that he might be held as reprobate for the priesthood. But so much could the predestined election of the supernal dispensation in him, that not even thus did he lose in the faith of the new grace what he had primarily obtained in kind. For having been made bishop, he founded the Alexandrian Church and, after the distinguished architect raised it upon the rock which is Christ, he faithfully dedicated it to the glorious name of his master.

Unde factum est ut eadem Ecclesia non tam ex Marci quam ex beati Petri vocabulo sedes apostolica vocitetur, tanquam si Petrus ipse per se illic episcopalem cathedram tenuisset; ideoque clavicularii coelestis insignita vocabulo, in toto orbe terrarum Ecclesia illa post Romam secundum obtinet thronum. Et quanquam Antiochiae, ubi scilicet Christianae religionis nomen exortum est, Petrus ipse per se fidei primitias intulisset, superiorem tamen locum Alexandrina sedes obtinuit, ut in eminentiorum catalogo sedium Romana primum, Alexandrina secundum, Antiochena vero Ecclesia tertium possideat principatum. Et merito ubi Marcus, ibi Petrus, quia fluento Evangelii quod ex ore Petri velut ex eructanti fonte profluxit, Marcus, ut uberrimus atque perspicuus paradisi fluvius, arva totius Ecclesiae copiosius inundavit.

Sed quaeri potest, cur beatus Marcus, qui tantae fidei tantaeque circa magistrum dilectionis exstitisse dignoscitur, ut unum cor, una certe in duabus fuisse personis anima videatur, magistri sui laudes atque praeconia omnino tacuerit? Nam cum caeteri evangelistae sublimia beati Petri merita et principalem celsitudinis gloriam frequenter enumerent, solus iste, si totus Evangelii sui tenor inquiritur, vix aliquid super magistro suo retulisse, quod ad laudem pertineat, invenitur. Imo si diligenter inspicitur, auget ac verbis accumulat, si quid in eo reprehensibile est; supprimit autem, et velut ex industria levigat, vel etiam plerumque silentio praeterit quod laudabile est. Quod evidentius ostendimus, si pauca ejusdem Evangelii testimonia breviter apponamus. Certe per omnes Ecclesias celebri quotidie frequentatione vulgatur quod beatus Petrus super aquas ambulasse describitur. Quod utique Matthaeus tam aperte declarat ut ambulanti Domino super mare Petrum exclamasse, referat: «Domine, si tu es, jube me venire ad te super aquas.» Cumque dixisset: «Veni,» praesto subjunxit: «Et descendens Petrus de navicula, ambulabat super aquam, ut veniret ad Jesum (Matth. XIV).» Marcus autem ad hunc veniens locum, omnia per ordinem plena relatione describit (Marc. VI), excepto quod Petri nullam penitus mentionem facit.

Jam vero quis tantam Petri gloriam, quis tam eximiae celsitudinis excellentiam non miretur, quia, cum Salvator inquireret quem esse se homines perhiberent, expositisque diversorum opinionibus, quid Apostoli sentiant consuluntur, tunc primus exstitit in verae fidei confessione, qui primus erat in apostolica dignitate. Ait enim Petrus: «Tu es Christus, Filius Dei vivi (Matth. XVI).» Et Dominus: «Beatus es, Simon Barjona, quia caro, et sanguis non revelavit tibi, sed Pater meus, qui in coelis est.

Whence it came about that the same Church is called the apostolic see not so much from Mark's as from the blessed Peter's name, as if Peter himself through himself had held the episcopal chair there; and therefore marked with the name of the heavenly key-bearer, that Church in the whole world holds the second throne after Rome. And although in Antioch, where namely the name of the Christian religion arose, Peter himself through himself had brought in the first fruits of the faith, nevertheless the Alexandrian see obtained the superior place, so that in the catalogue of the more eminent sees the Roman possesses the first, the Alexandrian the second, but the Antiochian Church the third primacy. And deservedly where Mark, there Peter, because by the stream of the Gospel which flowed forth from the mouth of Peter as from a belching fountain, Mark, as a most abundant and conspicuous river of paradise, more copiously inundated the fields of the whole Church.

But it can be asked, why the blessed Mark, who is known to have stood out with such faith and such love towards his master, that there seems to have been one heart, certainly one soul in two persons, was altogether silent concerning the praises and proclamations of his master? For while the other evangelists frequently enumerate the sublime merits of the blessed Peter and the principal glory of his highness, he alone, if the whole tenor of his Gospel is searched, is found hardly to have related anything concerning his master which pertains to praise. Nay, if it is diligently inspected, he increases and accumulates with words if there is anything reprehensible in him; but he suppresses, and as if by industry smooths over, or even for the most part passes over in silence what is laudable. Which we show more evidently if we briefly set forth a few testimonies of the same Gospel. Certainly it is published daily with celebrated frequentation through all the Churches that the blessed Peter is described to have walked upon the waters. Which Matthew indeed so clearly declares that he relates Peter to have exclaimed to the Lord walking upon the sea: "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you upon the waters." And when He had said: "Come," he immediately subjoined: "And Peter descending from the boat, walked upon the water, to come to Jesus (Matth. XIV)." But Mark coming to this place, describes all things by order in full relation (Marc. VI), except that he makes absolutely no mention of Peter.

Now indeed who would not wonder at such glory of Peter, who at such excellence of exceptional highness, because, when the Savior inquired who men perhibited Him to be, and the opinions of diverse people having been set forth, the Apostles are consulted as to what they feel, then he stood out first in the confession of the true faith, who was first in the apostolic dignity. For Peter says: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matth. XVI)." And the Lord: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but my Father, who is in heaven.

Et ego dico tibi, quia tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam, et portae inferi non praevalebunt adversus eam: et tibi dabo claves regni coelorum, et quodcunque ligaveris super terram erit ligatum et in coelis, et quodcunque solveris super terram erit solutum et in coelis (Ibid.).» Nunquid hoc tonitru muneris singularis aures beati Marci praeterire potuit, quod totius mundi latitudinem omniumque ubique fidelium ora complevit? Et quod de Petro Matthaeus dixit, Petrus ut hoc suo discipulo diceret ignoravit, hunc siquidem historiae locum Marcus ita velut negligendo transcurrit? Respondens Petrus ait: «Tu es Christus. Et comminatus est eis ne cui dicerent de illo (Marc. II).» Et non modo non refert Petrum a Domino singularis inter caeteros privilegii gloria sublimatum, sed potius austera narrat animadversione correptum. Nam paulo post, cum ei Petrus dissuaderet, ne se crucifigi permitteret, Marcus eum tanquam zelo permotum dixisse testatur: «Vade retro me, Satana, quoniam non sapis ea, quae Dei sunt, sed quae hominum (Ibid.).» Quid est ergo quod beatus Marcus quidquid ad magistri sui gloriam pertinet, velut oblivioni tradidit, quidquid vero ad reprehensionem tam tenaci memoriae commendavit, unde praeceptor ejus laudaretur, velut ignorando pertransiit, unde notaretur, acuta prorsus et plana relatione digessit, praesertim cum quidquid occulto conscriberet, ejus obtutibus offerendum esse disponeret, ejus probandum judicio reservaret? Jam vero, ut brevitatis studio multa praetereamus, ad passionem Domini veniamus.

Certe notum est quia, ministris comprehendentibus Dominum, Petrus, ut revera fidelis servus et fervens spiritu, in ictum gladii se ultor erexit et auriculam servi Judam proditorem impium comitantis, abscidit. Unde et Joannes: «Simon, inquit, Petrus habens gladium, eduxit illum, et percussit pontificis servum et abscidit ejus auriculam dextram (Joan. XVIII).» Sed ubi Joannes scripsit, «Simon Petrus,» ibi Marcus posuit, «unus autem quidam de circumstantibus (Marc. XIV),» quatenus sic veritatis historiam texeret, ut tamen magistri gloriam silentio praeteriret. Sicque veridici scriptoris impleret officium, ut personae cujuslibet ignorando favorem, assentatoris non incurreret naevum. Merae quippe veritati deserviens, in omnibus, quae conscripsit, commodi spem nescivit, amicitiae jura contempsit, humanam funditus gratiam ignoravit. Postremo ad Petri negationem veniens, cum caeteri evangelistae quod a Petro dictum est, verbis mitioribus levigent; solus iste durius loquitur et tanquam crimen exaggeret, incautiora magistrum verba praecipitanter effudisse testatur. «Coepit, inquit, anathematizare, et jurare, quia nescio hominem, quem dicis (Ibid.).»

And I say to you, that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and to you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven (Ibid.)." Could this thunder of a singular gift have passed by the ears of the blessed Mark, which filled the breadth of the whole world and the mouths of all the faithful everywhere? And that which Matthew said of Peter, did Peter ignore to tell this to his disciple, since Mark runs through this place of history as if by neglecting? Peter responding says: "You are the Christ. And He threatened them that they should tell no one of Him (Marc. II)." And not only does he not relate Peter to have been sublimated by the Lord with the glory of a singular privilege among the others, but rather relates him to have been corrected with austere animadversion. For a little after, when Peter dissuaded Him from permitting Himself to be crucified, Mark testifies that He said as if moved by zeal: "Get behind me, Satan, because you savor not the things that are of God, but those that are of men (Ibid.)." What is it therefore that the blessed Mark delivered to oblivion whatever pertains to the glory of his master, but whatever pertains to reprehension he commended to such tenacious memory; that from which his preceptor would be praised, he passed over as if by ignoring, but that from which he would be noted, he digested with an altogether sharp and plain relation, especially since whatever he wrote in secret, he disposed to be offered to his gaze, and reserved to be proved by his judgment? Now indeed, so that by the study of brevity I may pass over many things, let us come to the passion of the Lord.

Certainly it is known that, when the ministers were seizing the Lord, Peter, as a truly faithful servant and fervent in spirit, rose up as an avenger with a stroke of the sword and cut off the ear of the servant accompanying Judas the impious traitor. Whence also John says: "Simon Peter," he said, "having a sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear (John XVIII)." But where John wrote, "Simon Peter," there Mark put, "a certain one of those standing by (Mark XIV)," insofar as he might so weave the history of truth that he might nevertheless pass over the glory of his master in silence. And so he would fulfill the office of a truthful writer, that by ignoring the favor of any person, he might not incur the blemish of a flatterer. For serving pure truth, in all things which he wrote, he knew no hope of advantage, he despised the laws of friendship, and he utterly ignored human favor. Finally coming to the denial of Peter, while the other evangelists lighten what was said by Peter with milder words; he alone speaks more harshly and, as if he would exaggerate the crime, testifies that his master precipitately poured out more incautious words. "He began," he says, "to anathematize and to swear, saying: I know not the man of whom you speak (Ibid.)."

Cur, beate Marce, tam egregio, tam insigni praeceptori tuo, quem animo devotus unice diligis, stylo non parcis? Ut, et quae laudibus sint efferenda praetereas, et quae reprehensionis videantur apta, describas?

Cur hoc potius libro tuo non inseris, quod Petrus ad jussionem Domini, primo scilicet hami jactu, piscem cepit, in cujus ore staterem reperit, quem pro se, simul et ipso tributum, quod Caesari debebatur, tanquam Domino comparatus appendit? (Matth. XVII.) Nunquid et hoc te fugit quia, postquam illi Salvator claudendi, sive pandendi regni coelestis privilegium contulit, postquam illi universa terrarum regna subjecit (Matth. XVI), postquam denique, ne fides ejus tanquam totius Ecclesiae fundamentum quandoque deficeret, se orasse perhibuit (Luc. XXII), super cunctum mox ovium suarum gregem ei vice sua passionis custodiam delegavit? «Petre, inquit, diligis me? Pasce oves meas (Joan. XXI.)» Cur igitur a tot magistri praeconiis calamum reprimis, et sola, quae infirmitatis sunt, ad posterorum memoriam stylo committis? Sed omnino credendum est, fratres mei, quia, cum unus utrumque spiritus impleat, unus utriusque corda possideat; alter ab altero, ille in docendi, iste in scribendi studio non discordat. Sicut enim Petrus a propria sua laude cohibuit, ita veridicus illius interpres ab ea, quam in magistro non didicit, suae descriptionis articulum refrenavit. Ad magnum quippe factum est nostrae aedificationis exemplum, ut et ille de se non efferenda, sed reprehendenda proferret, et iste sic per veritatis lineam rectus incederet ut ne ad magistri quidem favorem aliquatenus declinaret. Nam cum Paulus dicat apostolus: «Ego si hominibus placere vellem, Christi servus non essem (Galat. I).» Et alibi Scriptura prohibeat: «Quod tibi fieri non vis, alii ne feceris (Tob. IV);» beatus evangelista noluit exhibere magistro quod ipse sibi praeberi nollet ab altero. Quem utique si laude praeferret, magis offenderet quam praestaret. Hi plane libenter alios laudibus efferunt qui laudem ab adulatoribus quaerunt. Caeterum qui recusat accipere dedignatur offerre. Enimvero ex Matthaei libro, qui jam utique fuerat editus B. Petri laudes Marcus addiscere potuit, quas in ejus relationibus non audivit; sed morigeratus est magistro, et, qui non delectabatur suis, laudibus abstinuit alienis.

Why, blessed Mark, do you not spare with your pen your so eminent, so distinguished preceptor, whom you uniquely love with a devoted soul? That you both pass over those things which are to be extolled with praises, and describe those things which seem fit for reprehension?

Why do you not rather insert this in your book, that Peter at the command of the Lord, namely by the first cast of the hook, caught a fish, in whose mouth he found a stater, which he paid as a tribute owed to Caesar for himself, and at the same time for Him as compared to the Lord? (Matth. XVII.) Did it also escape you that, after the Savior conferred on him the privilege of closing or opening the heavenly kingdom, after he subjected all the kingdoms of the earth to him (Matth. XVI), after finally, lest his faith as the foundation of the whole Church should ever fail, He showed that He had prayed (Luke XXII), He soon delegated to him in His place the custody of His passion over the entire flock of His sheep? "Peter," He said, "do you love me? Feed my sheep (John XXI.)" Why therefore do you restrain your pen from so many heraldings of your master, and commit with your pen to the memory of posterity only those things which are of infirmity? But it is altogether to be believed, my brothers, that, since one spirit fills both, one possesses the hearts of both; the one from the other, he in teaching, this one in the study of writing, does not discord. For just as Peter withheld from his own praise, so his truthful interpreter refrained the point of his description from that which he did not learn in his master. For it was done for a great example of our edification, that both he should bring forth things not to be extolled but to be reprehended about himself, and this one should so walk straight along the line of truth that he should not decline in any way even to the favor of his master. For since Paul the apostle says: "If I wished to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ (Galat. I)." And elsewhere the Scripture prohibits: "What you do not wish to be done to you, do not do to another (Tob. IV);" the blessed evangelist did not wish to exhibit to his master what he himself would not wish to be offered to himself by another. Whom certainly if he should prefer with praise, he would offend more than he would benefit. Those clearly willingly extol others with praises who seek praise from flatterers. But he who refuses to receive, disdains to offer. Indeed, from the book of Matthew, which had already certainly been published, Mark was able to learn the praises of Blessed Peter, which he did not hear in his relations; but he was compliant to his master, and, he who was not delighted by his own, abstained from the praises of others.

Poruro autem nonnulla reperiuntur quae sic sunt a B. Marco digesta ut reliquis evangelistis videantur esse contraria. Quae tamen si sagacius perscrutentur, et caeteris consona et sincerissimae fidei reperiuntur veritate fundata, sicut est quod caeteri hora sexta (Matth. XXVII; Luc. XXIII; Joan. XIX), hic asserit hora tertia (Marc. XV) Dominum crucifixum. Quae profecto diversitas ista dirimitur, ut, quoniam hora tertia tumultuati sunt: Crucifige, crucifige, eadem hora Dominum linguae crucifixerint Judaeorum, quem hora sexta corporaliter clavi confixere gentilium. Illi itaque juxta corporalem, ut ita loquar, rei gestae loquuntur historiam; iste, spiritualem protulit de furiosa Judaeorum crudelitate sententiam. Illi praetereant referunt, ante galli cantum ter a Petro Dominum fuisse negatum (Matth. XXVI; Luc. XXII); iste, qui hoc ex ore scilicet ipsius negantis audivit, non antequam gallus cantaret, sed antequam bis cantaret, negationem hanc factam esse perscripsit (Marc. XIV). Quod profecto, juxta fidem rei, veraciter contigisse, sicut Marcus asserit, indubitanter agnoscitur. Quod autem alii evangelistae dicunt, ita debet intelligi ut trina illa negatio ante galli quidem tantum fuerit coepta, sed postquam semel cecinit, sit expleta, ut, quoniam in Scripturis pars solet poni pro toto, id quod per Matthaeum dicitur: «Antequam gallus cantet, ter me negabis,» sic intelligatur tanquam diceret: ter me negaturus antequam gallus cantet, incipies; sed eamdem negationem, postquam semel cantaverit, antequam cantare bis adjiciat, consummabis. Sic itaque, et quod Marcus ait: «Priusquam gallus cantet bis;» et quod alii dicunt: «Antequam gallus cantet, ter me negabis,» licet verbis videantur exterioribus dissonare, congruentissima reperiuntur intentione congruere.

Neque enim sine causa, fratres mei, beatus iste Marcus, vel apud Moysen sub schemate fluviorum (Gen. II), vel apud Ezechielem per facies animalium (Ezech. I), sicut superius dictum est, inter sanctos evangelistas secundum obtinet locum. Sed honorem, quem in praedestinato sortitus est ordine, servat in evangelica veritate. Nam in Apocalypsi Joannis cum sanctorum animalium ordo describitur, non jam secundus, sed primus hic in eorum catalogo reperitur. «In medio sedis, inquit, et in circuitu sedis quatuor animalia plena oculis ante et retro;»

Furthermore, some things are found which were so digested by Blessed Mark that they seem to be contrary to the other evangelists. Which, however, if they are more sagaciously scrutinized, are found both consonant with the others and founded on the truth of most sincere faith, such as that the others assert that the Lord was crucified at the sixth hour (Matth. XXVII; Luke XXIII; John XIX), while this one asserts it was at the third hour (Mark XV). Which diversity is indeed resolved thus, that, since at the third hour they shouted: Crucify Him, crucify Him, at that same hour they crucified the Lord with the tongues of the Jews, whom at the sixth hour the nails of the Gentiles fixed corporally. Those, therefore, speak according to the corporal history, so to speak, of the thing done; this one brought forth a spiritual sentence concerning the furious cruelty of the Jews. Those, moreover, relate that the Lord was denied three times by Peter before the cock crowed (Matth. XXVI; Luke XXII); this one, who heard this from the mouth, namely, of the denier himself, wrote that this denial was made not before the cock crowed, but before it crowed twice (Mark XIV). Which indeed, according to the faith of the matter, is acknowledged to have truly happened just as Mark asserts, without doubt. But what the other evangelists say, ought to be so understood that that threefold denial was indeed only begun before the cock crowed, but after it sang once, it was completed, so that, since in the Scriptures a part is usually put for the whole, that which is said by Matthew: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me thrice," is so understood as if he said: you will begin to deny me thrice before the cock crows; but you will consume that same denial after it has sung once, before it adds to sing twice. Thus, both what Mark says: "Before the cock crows twice;" and what the others say: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me thrice," although they seem to discord in exterior words, are found to agree in most congruent intention.

Nor indeed without cause, my brothers, does this blessed Mark, either with Moses under the figure of rivers (Gen. II), or with Ezekiel through the faces of animals (Ezek. I), as was said above, hold the second place among the holy evangelists. But the honor which he obtained in the predestined order, he preserves in evangelical truth. For in the Apocalypse of John when the order of the holy animals is described, not now second, but first is he found in their catalogue. "In the midst of the throne," he says, "and round about the throne were four animals full of eyes before and behind;"

moxque subjungit: «Et animal primum simile leoni, et secundum animal simile vitulo, et tertium animal habens faciem quasi hominis, et quartum animal simile aquilae volanti (Apoc. IV).» Haec est sane quadriga illa Domini, et verum Cherubim, quo innixus omnia circuit, ubique discurrit. Innumerabiles hinc inde pervigiles oculi; scintillae crebrius emicant, fulgura pavenda coruscant. Recti pedes, et in sublime tendentes: Terga pennata, et ubique volantia. Tenent se mutuo, sibique perplexi sunt. Et tanquam rota in medio rotae illuc jugiter pergunt, quo virtute sancti Spiritus impelluntur. Haec est, inquam, quadriga, de qua in Canticis dicitur: «Nescivi, anima mea conturbavit me propter quadrigas Aminadab (Cant. VI).» Vox est Synagogae, quae videns tantam sanctae Ecclesiae gratiam esse collatam, dolet se tardius recepisse fidem, eo quod Evangelli non agnoverit veritatem. Aminadab autem at nepos Judae fuisse cognoscitur, qui in genealogia Domini cum patribus numeratur. Interpretatur Aminadab, populi mei spontaneus, ideoque non incongrue significat Christum, qui populi sui spontaneus fuit, quia cum Deus esset, sponte factus est homo. Qui enim non necessitate, sed sola bonitate nos condidit, propria nihilominus voluntate redemit. Unde et Jacobus ait: «Voluntate genuit nos verbo veritatis (Jac. I).» Spontaneus ergo factus est populi sui, quia quem a se humana pravitas repulit, sola voluntas divinae gratiae redonavit. Quadriga vero Aminadab Christi est Evangelium concordissima quatuor evangelistarum diversitate compactum. Quam sane quadrigam Christus auriga disponit, et quadrifidam mundi machinam agillima praedicationis celeritate percurrit, sicut per Psalmistam dicitur: «Qui emittit eloquium suum terrae, velociter currit sermo ejus (Psal. CXLVII).»

Videns ergo Synagoga repente gratiam evangelicae praedicationis erumpere cunctasque mundi provinces agiliter pervolare, subito turbata conqueritur quod sola in sua perfidia, conversis ad fidem gentibus, deseratur: «Nescivi, inquiens, conturbavit me anima mea propter quadrigas Aminadab.» Hanc quadrifariae praedicationis gratiam Dominus figuravit, cum Moysi de portanda a sacerdotibus arca praecepit: «Facies, inquit, quatuor circulos aureos, quos pones per quatuor arcae angulos; faciesque vectes de lignis Sethim, et operies auro, inducesque per circulos, qui sunt in arcae lateribus, ut portetur in eis, qui semper erunt in circulis, et nunquam extrahentur ab eis (Exod. XXV).» Quid per arcam, nisi sancta designatur Ecclesia?

and soon he adds: "And the first animal like a lion, and the second animal like a calf, and the third animal having a face as if of a man, and the fourth animal like a flying eagle (Apoc. IV)." This is surely that chariot of the Lord, and the true Cherubim, upon which leaning He circles all things and runs everywhere. Innumerable watchful eyes on this side and that; sparks flash out frequently, and fearful lightnings glitter. Straight feet, and tending on high: winged backs, and flying everywhere. They hold each other mutually, and are perplexed among themselves. And like a wheel in the midst of a wheel they go thither continually, whither they are impelled by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is, I say, the chariot, of which it is said in the Canticles: "I knew not, my soul troubled me because of the chariots of Aminadab (Cant. VI)." It is the voice of the Synagogue, which seeing such great grace of the holy Church to have been conferred, grieves that she received the faith later, because she did not acknowledge the truth of the Gospel. Aminadab, moreover, is known to have been the grandson of Judah, who is numbered in the genealogy of the Lord with the fathers. Aminadab is interpreted as "spontaneous of my people," and therefore not incongruously signifies Christ, who was spontaneous of His people, because since He was God, He was spontaneously made man. For He who created us not by necessity, but by goodness alone, redeemed us nonetheless by His own will. Whence also James says: "Of His own will He begat us by the word of truth (James I)." He was therefore made spontaneous of His people, because whom human depravity repelled from itself, only the will of divine grace restored. But the chariot of Aminadab is the Gospel of Christ, compacted from the most concordant diversity of the four evangelists. Which chariot indeed Christ the charioteer disposes, and He runs through the fourfold machine of the world with the most agile speed of preaching, as is said through the Psalmist: "Who sends forth His speech to the earth, His word runs swiftly (Psal. CXLVII)."

The Synagogue therefore seeing the grace of evangelical preaching suddenly break forth and fly nimbly through all the provinces of the world, suddenly troubled, complains that she alone is deserted in her perfidy while the nations are converted to the faith: "I knew not," saying, "my soul troubled me because of the chariots of Aminadab." This grace of fourfold preaching the Lord figured, when He commanded Moses concerning the ark to be carried by the priests: "You shall make," He said, "four golden circles, which you shall place through the four corners of the ark; and you shall make poles of Shittim wood, and cover them with gold, and you shall lead them through the circles which are in the sides of the ark, that it may be carried in them, which shall always be in the circles, and shall never be drawn out from them (Exod. XXV)." What is designated by the ark, if not the holy Church?

Cui quatuor circuli aurei per quatuor angulos jubentur adjungi, quia in eo, quod per quatuor mundi partes dilatata tenditur, procul dubio quatuor sancti Evangelii libris accincta praedicatur. Vectesque de lignis Sethim fiunt, qui eisdem ad portandum circulis inseruntur, quia fortes perseverantesque doctores velut imputribilia ligna quaerendi sunt, qui instructioni sacrorum voluminum semper inhaerentes, sanctae Ecclesiae unitatem denuntient et quasi intromissi circulis arcam portent. Vectibus quippe arcam portare, est bonis doctoribus ad sanctam Ecclesiam rudes fidelium mentes praedicando deducere. Qui auro quoque jubentur operiri, ut, cum sermone aliis insonant, ipsi etiam vitae splendore fulgescant. De quibus apte subditur: «Qui semper erunt in circulis, nec unquam extrahentur ab eis.» Quia nimirum necesse est ut qui ad officium praedicationis excubant a sacrae lectionis studio non recedant. Ad hoc namque vectes in circulis semper esse jubentur, ut cum portari arcam opportunitas exigit, de intromittendis vectibus nulla portandi tarditas generetur, quia videlicet cum spirituale aliquid a subditis pastor inquiritur, ignominiosum valde est, si tunc quaerat discere cum quaestionem debet enodare. But circulis vectes inhaereant, ut doctores semper in suis cordibus eloquia sacra meditantes, testamenti arcam sine mora elevent, si quidquid necesse est, protinus doceant. Unde bene primus pastor Ecclesiae pastores caeteros admonet, dicens: «Parati semper ad satisfactionem omni poscenti vos rationem de ea quae in vobis est spe (I Petr. III).» Ac si aperte dicat: ut portandam arcam nulla mora praepediat, vectes a circulis aliquando non recedant.

His aureis circulis, dilectissimi, et nos tanquam vectes de lignis Sethim inseramur, ut hujus mundi putredinem respuentes, in sanctorum evangelistarum paginis jugiter immoremur. Inter caeteros praeterea provocat nos ad imitandum se beati hujus Marci, non modo sancta doctrina, sed insignis etiam vita. Cui quod per prophetam dicitur non inconvenienter aptatur: «Primus, inquit, ad Sion dicit: Ecce adsum, et Hierusalem evangelistam dabo (Isai. XLI).» Qui nimirum vere aureus fuit circulus, quia, dum, per praedicationis officium quae sancta sunt docuit, splendentis etiam vitae moribus radiavit, et tanquam vectis ex ligno Sethim contempsit terrena omnia, quae putrescunt; coelestia petiit, quae marcescere nesciunt. Per obtruncationem membri foedavit corporis speciem, ne contra Ecclesiae regulam ecclesiasticam conscenderet dignitatem. Sed quod ille putavit patrocinium fugae, profecit in titulum gloriae. Nam unde se indignum reddidit, dignior fuit; et quod fugiebat, coactus incurrit.

To which four golden circles are commanded to be joined through the four corners, because in that she is extended, being dilated through the four parts of the world, without doubt she is preached girded with the four books of the holy Gospel. And poles are made of Shittim wood, which are inserted into the same circles for carrying, because strong and persevering teachers are to be sought like imputrescible wood, who always adhering to the instruction of the sacred volumes, announce the unity of the holy Church and, as if let into the circles, carry the ark. To carry the ark with poles, indeed, is to lead the rude minds of the faithful to the holy Church by preaching as good teachers. Who are also commanded to be covered with gold, so that, while they sound to others in speech, they themselves also shine with the splendor of life. Concerning whom it is aptly added: "Who shall always be in the circles, nor shall they ever be drawn out from them." Because surely it is necessary that those who watch for the office of preaching do not withdraw from the study of sacred reading. For this reason the poles are commanded to be always in the circles, so that when the opportunity demands the ark to be carried, no slowness of carrying be generated from inserting the poles, because namely when something spiritual is inquired of the pastor by subjects, it is very ignominious if he then seeks to learn when he ought to disentangle the question. But let the poles adhere to the circles, so that the teachers always meditating the sacred eloquences in their hearts, may lift up the ark of the testament without delay, if they should teach immediately whatever is necessary. Whence well the first pastor of the Church admonishes the other pastors, saying: "Be always ready for the satisfaction of every one asking you a reason of that hope which is in you (I Pet. III)." As if he should say openly: that no delay may impede the carrying of the ark, let the poles at some time not withdraw from the circles.

In these golden circles, most beloved, let us also be inserted like poles of Shittim wood, so that rejecting the rottenness of this world, we may continually dwell in the pages of the holy evangelists. Among others, moreover, the not only holy doctrine, but also the distinguished life of this blessed Mark provokes us to imitate him. To whom that which is said through the prophet is not inconveniently fitted: "The first," he says, "says to Zion: Behold I am here, and I will give an evangelist to Jerusalem (Isai. XLI)." Who surely was truly a golden circle, because, while through the office of preaching he taught those things which are holy, he also radiated with the manners of a shining life, and like a pole from Shittim wood he despised all earthly things, which rot; he sought heavenly things, which know not how to wither. Through the cutting off of a member he defiled the beauty of his body, lest he should ascend to ecclesiastical dignity against the rule of the Church. But what he thought a protection of flight, profited for a title of glory. For whence he rendered himself unworthy, he was more worthy; and that which he fled, he incurred by compulsion.

Beata es, o Alexandria, triumphali apostolici martyris sanguine purpurata. Felix et tu, Italia, et dudum scilicet Evangelium scribentis alumna, et nunc pretioso sacratissimi corporis thesauro dives effecta. Sic oriens per Aegyptum, occidens per Romanum decoratur imperium. Sit illi gloria, qui mirabilis in sanctis suis (Psal. LXVII), eos etiam mirabiles facit in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XV.

II DE S. MARCO EVANGELISTA. (XXV APR.)

Illud etiam, dilectissimi, vos ignorare non patiar quoniam octavo Neroniani imperii anno triumphalem martyrii palmam beatus Marcus obtinuit, cui mox et Anianus in Alexandrinae sedis dignitate successit et beatus Petrus apostolus Romae septennio supervixit. Unde, superna disponente clementia, factum est ut, cum Alexandriam prius et splendoribus evangelicae praedicationis et effusione sacrosancti sanguinis illustrasset, ad Italiam deinde quodam postliminio sit reversus, ut eadem potissimum terra, in qua sibi datum est Evangelium scribere, sacras mereretur ejus reliquias possidere, et ubi sibi concessum est evangelicae descriptionis jubar effundere, illic per gloriosae glebae suae praesentiam plurimis virtutum atque signorum radiis coruscaret.

Porro si diligenter omnium evangelistarum, 74 in quibus defuncti sunt, loca percurrimus, neminem eorum in eo, quem sortitus est, perseverasse tumulo reperimus. In Joannis scilicet sepultura post obitum non corpus ejus, sed manna repertum est. Beati vero Matthaei corpore non Aethiopia, ubi peremptus agnoscitur, sed Salernitana potius civitas decoratur. Sanctus etiam Lucas, cum in Bithyniae partibus, sicut historia testatur, obierit, vicesimo anno Constantii Caesaris de Achaia Constantinopolim translatus est cum sacrosanctis beati apostoli Andreae reliquiis. Hic vero, de quo nunc agitur, sanctus evangelista Marcus de Alexandria transvectus est, Deo misericorditer disponente, Venetiam, ut qui tunc totum Orientem velut aureus lucifer illustraverat, nunc per plagas Occidui climatis praesentiae suae radiis enitescat. Per Aegyptum quippe sibi dedicat ortum, per Venetiam tenet occasum. Illic Alexandrinae sortitus est ecclesiae solum; hic renascentis Aquileiae novum statuit principatum. Est itaque velut sidus aureum toto orbe praeclarum ac celebri totius Ecclesiae veneratione conspicuum.

Blessed are you, O Alexandria, empurpled with the triumphal blood of the apostolic martyr. Happy also are you, Italy, both long ago the nurse of the one writing the Gospel, and now made rich with the precious treasure of his most sacred body. Thus the East is decorated through Egypt, the West through the Roman empire. Glory be to Him, who being wonderful in His saints (Psal. LXVII), makes them also wonderful for ages of ages. Amen.

Sermon XV.

II ON ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST. (APR. 25)

I will not allow you to be ignorant of this also, most beloved, that in the eighth year of the Neronian empire, the blessed Mark obtained the triumphal palm of martyrdom, whom Anianus soon succeeded in the dignity of the Alexandrian see, and the blessed apostle Peter survived him at Rome for seven years. Whence, by the disposition of heavenly clemency, it happened that, after he had first illustrated Alexandria both by the splendors of evangelical preaching and by the shedding of his sacrosanct blood, he afterwards returned to Italy by a certain right of return, so that the very land in which it was given to him to write the Gospel might merit to possess his sacred relics, and where it was granted to him to pour forth the radiance of evangelical description, there he might gleam with many rays of virtues and signs through the presence of his glorious clod.

Furthermore, if we diligently traverse the places where all the evangelists died, we find that none of them has remained in the tomb which he first obtained. In the burial of John, for instance, after his death, not his body but manna was found. Ethiopia, where he is known to have been slain, is not decorated with the body of the blessed Matthew, but rather the city of Salerno. Saint Luke also, since he died in the parts of Bithynia, as history testifies, was translated from Achaia to Constantinople in the twentieth year of Constantius Caesar, with the sacrosanct relics of the blessed apostle Andrew. But he of whom we now treat, the holy evangelist Mark, was conveyed from Alexandria to Venice, by the merciful disposition of God, so that he who then had illustrated the whole East like a golden morning star, might now shine forth by the rays of his presence through the regions of the Western climate. For through Egypt he dedicates his rising, through Venice he holds his setting. There he obtained the soil of the Alexandrian church; here he established the new principality of reborn Aquileia. He is, therefore, like a golden star renowned throughout the whole world and conspicuous by the celebrated veneration of the entire Church.

Hoc itaque sidus, dilectissimi, prae oculis jugiter habeamus, hujus imitemur exemplum, si inter spumosos mundanae voraginis fluctus cupimus evitare naufragium. Hinc mare tumidum saeviat, illinc venti furentes impingant [f., impugnent], si ab hoc sidere mentis aciem non avertimus, procellarum inundantium impetus non timemus. Ad hoc itaque sidus sagenam mentis nostrae certi cursus linea dirigat, ad hoc omne laboris nostri remigium tendat, ut non, quod absit, vorago nos Syllaeae profunditatis absorbeat, non errorum cautes, vel invadosae syrtes improvidos obruant, sed in tutae quietis portum, et optatae tranquillitatis sinum supernus nos gubernator impellat Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XVI.

III DE S MARCO EVANGELISTA. (XXV APR.)

Nostis, dilectissimi, quia de beati Marci meritis clarisque virtutibus duos jam sermones absolvimus, ab ejus tamen adhuc laude quiescere impellente conscientia non valemus. Nam dum haec et illa virtutum ejus gesta perpendimus et tam sublimis gratiae meritum in mente versamus, stylum quoque exterioris articuli feriatum habere non possumus. Inter omnia plane tam conspicui splendoris insignia, illud mihi singulare videtur atque praecipuum quod per Marcum Alexandria secunda Petri sedes, ac per hoc apostolica sedes est a sanctis Patribus nuncupata. Nec enim ulla scriptura testatur authentica B. Petrum apostolum in Alexandria cathedram tenuisse, vel suam saltem illic exhibuisse praesentiam. Sed, dum Marcum, egregium videlicet discipulum, illi praesidere constituit, eam sibi tanquam per accessus sui praesentiam dedicavit. Similiter et Evangelium Marci Evangelium dicitur Petri, quoniam hoc fidelis interpres simpliciter et immutabiliter scripsit quod ex ore magistri veraciter enarrantis audivit. Porro autem, cum clavicularius iste coeli per tot terrarum regna discipulos destinaverit eisque per diverse mundi provincias Ecclesiarum regimen commiserit, quid est quod nulla earum, praeter solam duntaxat Alexandriam, vel Petri sedes, vel apostolica Ecclesia est appellata? Antiochia plane et ipsa sedes Petri dicitur, nimirum quod illic ipse per se tenuisse cathedram perhibetur; Alexandriae vero per se Petrus ipse non praefuit, sed eam per beatum Marcum, quem videlicet habuit et in doctrina discipulum et in baptismate filium, proprii nominis titulo decoravit.

Let us, therefore, most beloved, keep this star continually before our eyes, let us imitate its example, if we desire to avoid shipwreck among the foaming waves of the worldly whirlpool. From one side let the swollen sea rage, from the other let the raging winds strike, if we do not turn the gaze of our mind from this star, we do not fear the onset of the inundating storms. Let the line of a certain course direct the dragnet of our mind toward this star, let all the rowing of our labor tend toward this, so that, may it be far from us, the whirlpool of Scylla's depth may not absorb us, the rocks of errors or the syrtes of the shifting sands may not overwhelm the improvident, but the heavenly Pilot, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ages of ages, may drive us into the port of safe rest and the bosom of desired tranquility. Amen.

Sermon XVI.

III ON ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST. (APRIL 25)

You know, most beloved, that we have already completed two sermons on the merits and famous virtues of the blessed Mark, yet we are not able to rest from his praise, as our conscience impels us. For while we weigh these and those deeds of his virtues and revolve in our mind the merit of such sublime grace, we cannot have the pen of our outer limb at leisure. Among all the marks of such conspicuous splendor, it seems to me singular and pre-eminent that through Mark, Alexandria was called by the holy Fathers the second see of Peter, and by this an apostolic see. For no authentic scripture testifies that the blessed apostle Peter held a chair in Alexandria, or even exhibited his presence there. But, while he appointed Mark, his distinguished disciple namely, to preside there, he dedicated it to himself as if through the presence of his own approach. Similarly, the Gospel of Mark is called the Gospel of Peter, because this faithful interpreter wrote simply and immutably what he truly heard from the mouth of the master narrating it. Furthermore, since that key-bearer of heaven destined disciples through so many kingdoms of the lands and committed to them the government of the Churches through diverse provinces of the world, what is the reason that none of them, except only Alexandria at least, was called either the see of Peter or an apostolic Church? Antioch clearly is itself called the see of Peter, doubtlessly because he himself is reported to have held the chair there in person; but in Alexandria, Peter himself did not preside in person, but he decorated it with the title of his own name through the blessed Mark, whom he clearly had both as a disciple in doctrine and as a son in baptism.

Atque, quod mirabilius est, sicut Romana sedes excedit Alexandrinam singularis excellentiae culmine, sic et Alexandrina supereminet Antiochiae quadam privilegii dignitate ut superior illa sit sedes, cui Marcus vice Petri praefuit, quam ea cui propriam cathedram Petrus ipse praesedit. Cur ergo Spiritus sanctus beatorum pontificum mentibus ut hoc statuerent inspiravit, nisi quod Petrum et Marcum mente simul et animo, fide et voluntate, non duos quodammodo, sed unum potius esse cognovit? Tanta scilicet idem Spiritus eos invicem charitate constrinxerat, tanta mentis unanimitate conflaverat ut et cor unum et mens esset una duorum. Unde factum est ut quae sedes fuit Marci fieret indifferenter et Petri.

Novimus plane beatum Andream ejusdem sancti Petri fuisse germanum; testatur etiam scriptura quemdam Martialem gloriosae sanctitatis antistitem ejus exstitisse nepotem; sed neque Achaia, quam ille per triumphale vexillum crucis irradiat, vel etiam Lemovica provincia, in qua scilicet iste multo prodigiorum atque signorum fulgore coruscat, sedes Petri dicitur, sed quaelibet earum ejus tantum qui sibi praesidet nomine titulatur. Hoc potissimum Alexandria sola promeruit, ut per cathedram beati Marci sedes apostoli Petri constituta sit, appellari. Nec, ut credimus, absque divino nutu hoc illi civitati nomen impressum est. Alexandria siquidem ab Alexandro dicta est. Alexander autem interpretatur levans augustias tenebrarum; sed et Aegyptus, in qua scilicet Alexandria sita est, tenebrae dicitur. Quid autem totus mundus erat ante Redemptoris adventum, nisi densitas et confusio tenebrarum? Unde per Isaiam dicitur: «Habitantibus in regione umbrae mortis, lux orta est eis (Isai IX).» Tenebrosus erat mundus, quia necdum splendore coelestis gratiae fuerat illustratus. Tenebrae erant homines hujus mundi, quia necdum fuerant ad verum lumen a pravitatis suae caecitate conversi. Quibus jam de tenebris infidelitatis eductis et verae fidei luce micantibus per Apostolum dicitur: «Fuistis aliquando tenebrae, nunc autem lux in Domino (Ephes. V).» Quis igitur istarum levavit angustias tenebrarum, nisi sol ille justitiae Redemptor noster, qui dispulit caliginem peccatorum? Quis, inquam, ille est, qui tenebrarum levat angustias, nisi is, de quo Petrus dicit apostolus: «Qui peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpore suo super lignum (I Petr. II);» et per Isaiam dicitur: «Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit (Isai. LIII).» Nam si tenebrae sunt peccata, 76 angustiae tenebrarum ultiones sunt procul dubio et supplicia hominum peccatorum.

And, what is more wonderful, just as the Roman see exceeds the Alexandrian by the summit of singular excellence, so also the Alexandrian overspreads Antioch by a certain dignity of privilege, so that that see over which Mark presided in the stead of Peter is superior to that in which Peter himself presided in his own chair. Why then did the Holy Spirit inspire the minds of the blessed pontiffs to establish this, unless because He knew Peter and Mark to be together in mind and spirit, in faith and will, not two in a certain way, but one rather? For the same Spirit had bound them together with such great charity, had fused them with such unanimity of mind, that there was both one heart and one mind of the two. Whence it came to pass that the see which was Mark's became indifferently Peter's also.

We know clearly that the blessed Andrew was the brother of the same Saint Peter; Scripture also testifies that a certain Martial, a prelate of glorious holiness, was his nephew; but neither Achaia, which he irradiates through the triumphal banner of the cross, nor even the province of Limoges, in which he indeed gleams with much brightness of wonders and signs, is called the see of Peter, but each of them is entitled only by the name of him who presides over it. Alexandria alone especially merited this, that through the chair of the blessed Mark it was established to be called the see of the apostle Peter. Nor, as we believe, was this name impressed upon that city without divine nodding. For Alexandria was named after Alexander. But Alexander is interpreted as 'lifting the narrowness of the darkness'; but Egypt also, in which Alexandria is situated namely, is called 'darkness.' What, moreover, was the whole world before the coming of the Redeemer, except a density and confusion of darkness? Whence it is said through Isaiah: 'To those living in the region of the shadow of death, light has risen for them (Isai IX).' The world was dark, because it had not yet been illustrated by the splendor of heavenly grace. The men of this world were darkness, because they had not yet been converted from the blindness of their depravity to the true light. To whom, now led out from the darkness of infidelity and gleaming with the light of true faith, it is said through the Apostle: 'You were once darkness, but now light in the Lord (Ephes. V).' Who therefore of these lifted the narrowness of the darkness, except that Sun of Justice, our Redeemer, who dispelled the gloom of sins? Who, I say, is he who lifts the narrowness of the darkness, except he of whom the apostle Peter says: 'Who himself bore our sins in his own body upon the wood (I Pet. II);' and it is said through Isaiah: 'Truly he himself has borne our infirmities, and he himself has carried our sorrows (Isai. LIII).' For if sins are darkness, the narrowness of the darkness is undoubtedly the vengeance and punishments of sinful men.

Et quis istas tenebrarum levavit angustias, imo quis pertulit dignas delinquentium poenas, nisi is, de quo idem propheta dicit: «Ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras, attritus est propter scelera nostra? (Ibid.)» Sicut Alexander in Aegypto urbem construxit Alexandriam, sic Redemptor noster inter hujus mundi tenebras sanctam aedificavit Ecclesiam. Qui vere tenebrarum levavit angustias, dum scelerum nostrorum supplicia pertulit et mundi hujus Aegyptum novo verae fidei splendore perfudit. Hoc fecit Christus in Aegypto per Marcum, hoc per caeteros coelestis curiae senatores in toto fecit orbe terrarum.

Sed cur, Aegyptum beato Marco, fratres, ascribimus et amplissimam tam excellentis viri gloriam inter angustum unius terrae angulum coarctamus? Iste nimirum coelestis tonitrui vehemens tuba terribiliter intonat, et velut unus ex paradisi fluminibus raptim profluens, universam mundi latitudinem exuberantibus sancti Evangelii fluentis inundat. Felix quidem Alexandria, quam hic Christi bellator invictus triumphalis martyrii sui sanguine purpuravit, sed praecipue tu felix es et nimium beata Venetia, quam ad hoc ut pretiosum corporis sui thesaurum tibi commendaret elegit. Plurima quidem divitiarum copia ex diversis in te mundi partibus confluit, sed haec gemma coelestis, quae in medio tui posita est, in excelsum te gloria conspicuae dignitatis attollit. Incomparabilis enim iste thesaurus omnia vibrantium metallorum supergreditur genera, cuncta gemmarum coruscantium superat ornamenta. Sicut enim beatus Job de sapientia dicit: «Non adaequabitur ei aurum, vel vitrum; non commutabuntur pro ea vasa excelsa et eminentia; non adaequabitur ei aurum de Aethiopia, nec tincturae mundissimae componetur (Job. XXVIII);» et, ut ita loquar, haec est insignis quaedam species aromatica, quae sua virtute melliflua cinnamomum excellit ac balsamum, et omnium superat fragrantiam pigmentorum.

Porro si tantae per eum dignitatis est Alexandria, quam glorioso martyrii sui cruore perfudit, ut sedes apostolica nuncupetur, quantae putamus est excellentiae felix illa Provincia, in qua nunc pretiosa corporis ejus gleba reconditur? Nunquid non ejusdem gratiae et dignitatis esse credenda est, etsi non vulgato nomine, sed ipsa re et arcana sacra mysterii veritate? Illas denique partes ingressus est, dum adhuc jam in corruptibili carne mortalis existeret; istas autem elegit, cum jam in aeternum victurus in regni coelestis aula regnaret.

And who lifted these narrownesses of the darkness, nay rather, who bore the worthy punishments of the delinquents, except he of whom the same prophet says: 'But he himself was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our crimes (Ibid.)'? Just as Alexander built the city of Alexandria in Egypt, so our Redeemer built the holy Church among the darkness of this world. Who truly lifted the narrowness of the darkness, while he bore the punishments of our crimes and flooded the Egypt of this world with the new splendor of true faith. This Christ did in Egypt through Mark, this he did in the whole world through the other senators of the heavenly court.

But why, brothers, do we ascribe Egypt to the blessed Mark, and contract the most ample glory of so excellent a man within the narrow corner of one land? He indeed, a vehement trumpet of heavenly thunder, thunders terribly, and like one of the rivers of paradise flowing forth rapidly, he inundates the universal breadth of the world with the exuberant streams of the holy Gospel. Alexandria indeed is happy, which this unconquered warrior of Christ empurpled with the blood of his triumphal martyrdom, but you especially are happy and too blessed, Venice, which he chose for this, that he might commend to you the precious treasure of his body. A very great abundance of riches indeed flows together into you from diverse parts of the world, but this heavenly gem, which is placed in the midst of you, raises you on high with the glory of conspicuous dignity. For this incomparable treasure exceeds all kinds of vibrating metals, it surpasses all the ornaments of glittering gems. For as the blessed Job says concerning wisdom: 'Gold or glass shall not be equaled to it; neither shall high and eminent vessels be exchanged for it; gold from Ethiopia shall not be equaled to it, nor shall it be compared to the purest dyes (Job. XXVIII);' and, so to speak, this is a certain distinguished aromatic species, which by its mellifluous virtue excels cinnamon and balsam, and surpasses the fragrance of all pigments.

Furthermore, if Alexandria is of such great dignity through him, which he flooded with the glorious blood of his martyrdom, so that it is called an apostolic see, of how great excellence do we think that happy Province is, in which the precious clod of his body is now hidden? Must it not be believed to be of the same grace and dignity, even if not by a common name, yet in the very thing itself and the sacred secret truth of the mystery? Finally, he entered those parts while he still existed as a mortal in corruptible flesh; but he chose these when, now about to live forever, he was reigning in the hall of the heavenly kingdom.

Illos invisit, ut eos de tenebris infidelitatis ad id quod ipse jam mente conceperat, verae fidei lumen educeret; ad istos autem transferri voluit, ut illos ad eum, cum quo nunc est, ductorem luminis revocaret. Gaude igitur, et exsultans in Domino plaude Venetia, quia per illud pretiosi thesauri talentum, quod in te constat esse reconditum, facta es superni regis aerarium, et dum in tuo gremio virum apostolicae gratiae suscepisti, et ipsa quodammodo sedes apostolica fieri meruisti. Quamobrem, sicut mater urbium Roma super omnia regna terrarum sublimatur in 77 Petro, sic et tu, velut ejus insignis filia, per Marcum gloriaris in Christo. Quem scilicet humiliter imploramus, ut, sicut beatum Petrum de mari vocavit et navi (Matth. IV; Marc. I), deinde ne lapsus in pelagus obrueretur erigendo continuit, sic remigium tuum inter discrimina marina custodiat, et te cum filiis tuis ad portum quietis aeternae subducat qui vivit et regnat cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XVII.

I. DE S. VITALE MARTYRE. (XXVIII APRIL.)

Immensas Deo laudes et gratias referamus, dilectissimi fratres, quia, dum per totum orbem paschalis festivitas rutilat, nostrae patriae fines etiam beati Vitalis triumphalis dies illustrat. Hodie namque miles Christi gloriosus pro fide imperatoris sui in aeternum victurus occubuit. Hodie, devicto humani generis inimico, cum triumpho gloriae regna siderea penetravit. Hodie peracto studii sui cursu de ergastulo carnis victor exivit. Hodie alternantibus hinc inde hymnidicis angelorum choris palatium Regis aeterni purpuratus intravit, ubi cum ignitis beatorum spirituum coetibus inenarrabiliter emicat, cum trabeatis senatoribus curiae coelestis exsultat, cum patriarchis in aureo sublimiter solio inthronizatus, cum laureatis martyribus mirabiliter coronatus, cum his omnibus stola indutus gloriae ineffabili exsultatione tripudiat, et in conspectu aeterni Regis melodum Alleluia jucundissima suavitate decantat. O quam beate moritur qui moriendo oritur! quam feliciter temporalem vitam finit qui vivere perpetualiter incipit! Hinc est quod sancta Ecclesia dies migrationis sanctorum natales vocare consuevit, quia protinus in coelo nascuntur, cum in terra visibiliter moriuntur; et tunc vere incipiunt vivere, cum mortalem videntur vitam finire.

He visited those so that he might lead them out from the darkness of infidelity to that light of true faith which he had already conceived in his mind; but he wished to be transferred to these so that he might recall them to Him with whom he now is, the Leader of light. Rejoice therefore, and exulting in the Lord, applaud, O Venice, because through that talent of precious treasure which is known to be hidden in you, you have been made the treasury of the heavenly King, and while you have received into your bosom a man of apostolic grace, you yourself have in a certain way merited to become an apostolic see. Wherefore, just as Rome, the mother of cities, is sublimated in Peter above all the kingdoms of the earth, so also you, like his distinguished daughter, glory in Christ through Mark. Whom indeed we humbly implore, that, just as He called the blessed Peter from the sea and the ship (Matth. IV; Marc. I), then sustained him by lifting him up lest he should be overwhelmed by slipping into the sea, so He may guard your rowing among the marine dangers, and lead you with your sons to the port of eternal rest, who lives and reigns with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for all ages of ages. Amen.

Sermon XVII.

I. ON ST. VITALIS THE MARTYRE. (APRIL 28)

Let us refer immense praises and thanks to God, most beloved brothers, because, while the paschal festivity shines through the whole world, the triumphal day of the blessed Vitalis also illustrates the borders of our homeland. For today the glorious soldier of Christ died for the faith of his Emperor, to live forever. Today, the enemy of the human race being conquered, he entered the starry kingdoms with a triumph of glory. Today, the course of his study being completed, he went out as a victor from the prison of the flesh. Today, with the hymn-singing choirs of angels alternating here and there, he entered the palace of the eternal King, clothed in purple, where he gleams ineffably with the fiery companies of the blessed spirits, exults with the robed senators of the heavenly court, is enthroned sublimely with the patriarchs on a golden throne, is wonderfully crowned with the laurelled martyrs, and with all these, clothed in the robe of glory, he dances with ineffable exultation, and in the sight of the eternal King he sings the melodic Alleluia with most pleasant sweetness. Oh, how blessedly he dies who arises by dying! how happily he finishes temporal life who begins to live perpetually! Hence it is that the holy Church is accustomed to call the days of the migration of the saints 'birthdays' (natales), because they are immediately born in heaven when they visibly die on earth; and then they truly begin to live, when they seem to finish mortal life.

Perpendite, fratres mei, hic invictissimus miles Christi quam forte, quam robustum pectus habuerit, qui de sui periculo omnimodo securus, de alieno sollicitus, uno verbi telo et inimicum perculit et claudicantem jam inflicto vulnere socium ad agendum fortiter excitavit. Docta manus ad praelium dum vibravit hastam, socium, ut surgeret, tetigit, et vincenti jam adversario lethale vulnus inflixit. Ut enim in veracissima gestorum illius narratur historia, cum post nimia tormenta Ursicinus capitalem sententiam voluisset evadere, exclamavit beatus Vitalis, dicens: Noli, noli, Ursicine medice, qui alios curare consuevisti, teipsum aeternae mortis jaculo vulnerare. Sanctorum quippe virorum est consuetudo, fratres mei, ut in tribulationum bello deprehensi, dum illinc adversarios insequentes, hinc suos fugientes aspiciunt, illis opponant scutum patientiae, istis intorqueant jacula doctrinae; atque ad utrumque pugnandi modum mira virtutis arte se erigunt, quatenus et infirmi intus fortiter se erigant et foris viriliter adversa contemnant, hos docentes corrigant, illos tolerantes premant. Insurgentes namque hostes patiendo despiciunt, 78 infirmantes vero cives compatiendo ad salutem reducunt. Illis resistunt, ne et alios subtrahant; istis metuunt, ne, metuendo mortem, vitam funditus perdant. Illinc jaculis adversantia pectora feriunt; hinc scuto postposito debiles tuentur. Atque ita utrobique velocitate circumspectionis invigilant, quatenus et ante se audaces confodiant, et post se trepidos a vulnere defendant. Sed quisquis vult in campo certaminis fortiter agere, curet, necesse est, in pace domestica se custodire; in otio se frequenter exerceat, ne ignarus pugnandi incaute ad bella prorumpat, ne, si rudis et imperitus cum doctiore congreditur, dum arma armis praeter solitum conserere nititur, antequam insigne aliquid faciat, improviso vulnere prosternatur et victus intereat, unde victor esse totis nisibus anhelabat.

Neque etenim credendum est quod beatus Vitalis religiose vivere et in primis Deo servire tunc coeperit, cum ad agonem martyrii persecutoris illum crudelitas provocavit. Vir denique sanctus tunc etiam summis viribus fultus erat, cum sine ulla persecutionis molestia in pacis suae tranquillitate quieverat. Qui sibi tantummodo notus et Deo, nisi cogeretur in campum certaminis progredi, a nobis nullatenus potuisset agnosci. Virtus quippe se etiam tempore quietis exercuit, sed pravorum ictibus tunsa in adversitatis pila fragravit.

Consider, my brothers, what a strong, what a robust heart this most unconquered soldier of Christ had, who, entirely secure regarding his own danger, and solicitous for that of another, struck the enemy with one weapon of a word and excited his faltering companion, already wounded, to act bravely. While his skilled hand vibrated the spear for the battle, he touched his companion that he might rise, and inflicted a lethal wound upon the already conquering adversary. For as it is told in the most true history of his deeds, when after excessive torments Ursicinus wished to evade the capital sentence, the blessed Vitalis cried out, saying: 'Do not, do not, O physician Ursicinus, who have been accustomed to cure others, wound yourself with the dart of eternal death.' For it is indeed the custom of holy men, my brothers, that when they are caught in the war of tribulations, while they see the adversaries pursuing from one side, and their own people fleeing from the other, they oppose the shield of patience to those, and hurl the darts of doctrine at these; and they raise themselves to both modes of fighting by a wonderful art of virtue, so that the weak may raise themselves bravely within, and those without may manfully despise adversities, correcting the former by teaching, and pressing the latter by enduring. For they despise the rising enemies by enduring, and they lead the faltering citizens back to safety by sympathizing. They resist those, lest they should withdraw others; they fear for these, lest, by fearing death, they should utterly lose life. From one side they strike opposing breasts with darts; from the other, having put the shield behind them, they protect the weak. And so in both directions they watch with the speed of circumspection, so that they may both transfix the audacious before them, and defend the fearful behind them from a wound. But whoever wishes to act bravely in the field of contest, must necessarily take care to guard himself in domestic peace; let him exercise himself frequently in leisure, lest being ignorant of fighting he should break forth incautiously into wars, lest, if the rude and unskilful person engages with the more learned, while he strives to join arms with arms beyond his custom, before he does anything distinguished, he should be prostrated by an unforeseen wound and perish conquered, whence he was gasping with all his efforts to be victor.

For it is not to be believed that the blessed Vitalis then began to live religiously and to serve God in the first place, when the cruelty of the persecutor provoked him to the contest of martyrdom. Finally, the holy man was then also supported by the highest strengths, when he had rested in the tranquility of his peace without any molestation of persecution. He who was known only to himself and to God, unless he were compelled to go forward into the field of contest, could in no way have been recognized by us. For virtue indeed exercised itself even in time of quiet, but beaten by the blows of the wicked, it gave forth fragrance in the mortar of adversity.

Et qui quietus in semetipso quod erat continuit, commotus ad notitiam omnium odorem suae fortitudinis aspersit. Sicut enim unguenta redolere latius nesciunt, nisi commota, et sicut aromata fragrantiam suam nonnisi cum incenduntur expandunt, ita sancti viri omne quod virtutibus redolent in tribulationibus innotescunt. Unde recte in Evangelio dicitur: «Si habueritis fidem sicut granum sinapis, dicetis huic monti: Transi hinc, et transibit (Matth. XVII).» Granum quippe sinapis nisi conteratur, nequaquam vis virtutis ejus agnoscitur, nam non contritum lene est; si vero conteritur, inardescit, et quidquid in se acerrimum latebat ostendit. Sic nimirum, sic unusquisque vir sanctus cum non pulsatur, despicabilis ac lenis aspicitur; si qua vero illum tritura persecutionis opprimat, mox omne quod calidum sapit ostentat, atque in fervorem virtutis vertitur quidquid in illo ante despicabile infirmumque videbatur, quodque in se per tranquillitatis tempora libens operuit, exagitatus tribulationibus coactus innotescit. Unde bene per Prophetam dicitur - «In die mandavit Dominus misericordiam suam, et nocte declaravit (Psal. XLI).» Misericordia enim Domini in die mandatur, quia in tranquillo tempore virtus divinitus concessa percipitur; in nocte vero declaratur, quia donum, quod in tranquillitate sumitur, tribulationibus manifestatur.

Si enim quaeritur cujus virtutis beatus Vitalis ante certamen fuerit, quo disciplinae vigore domum suam bonus paterfamilias rexerit, quam religioso, quam sancto vivendi ordine filios instituerit, beata Valeria uxor ejus cum duobus filiis requisita dicat; «ut in ore duorum vel trium testium stet omne verbum (Matth. XVIII).» Illa enim, audita morte Vitalis beatissimi conjugis, non avidos pervasores suis possessionibus timuit, non potentioris cujuslibet patrocinium quaesivit, non more 79 viduarum dispersas ubicunque res suas in tuto loco colligere studuit, sed castissimi conjugii fidem servans, ad impendendum funeris obsequium de Mediolanensi urbe usque Ravennam mirabili fervore pervenit. Non illam deterruit tam longi difficultas itineris, non retinere potuit metus amittendae possessionis, non eam propinquorum, sive concivium amor in Mediolanensi urbe devinxit, non eam consularis immanissimus furor a Ravennae finibus exturbavit. Illuc quippe erectus ejus spiritus medullitus intendebat, quo beatissimum virum, calcata jam morte, praecessisse cognoverat. Ubi enim erat thesaurus ejus, ibi erat et cor ejus (Matth. XVI). Laetabatur illum in habitatione jam degere, dolebat se adhuc in exsilio remanere.

And he who, quiet within himself, contained what he was, when moved to the knowledge of all, sprinkled the odor of his fortitude. For just as ointments do not know how to smell more widely unless moved, and just as aromatics do not expand their fragrance unless when they are burned, so holy men make known in tribulations all that they smell of by virtues. Whence it is rightly said in the Gospel: 'If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain: Remove from hence, and it shall remove (Matth. XVII).' For unless the grain of mustard seed be ground, the force of its virtue is in no way recognized, for not ground it is mild; but if it be ground, it grows hot, and shows whatever most sharp thing was hiding in it. Thus indeed, thus every holy man, when he is not struck, is seen as despicable and mild; but if any threshing of persecution should oppress him, soon he shows all that tastes hot, and whatever before seemed despicable and weak in him is turned into the fervor of virtue, and that which he willingly covered within himself through times of tranquility, being agitated by tribulations, he makes known under compulsion. Whence it is well said through the Prophet: 'In the day the Lord commanded his mercy, and in the night he declared it (Psal. XLI).' For the mercy of the Lord is commanded in the day, because in tranquil time the virtue granted from heaven is perceived; but in the night it is declared, because the gift which is taken in tranquility is manifested by tribulations.

For if it is asked what virtue the blessed Vitalis had before the contest, with what vigor of discipline he as a good father of the family ruled his house, by how religious and how holy an order of living he instructed his sons, let the blessed Valeria his wife with her two sons being requested say; 'so that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand (Matth. XVIII).' For she, having heard of the death of Vitalis her most blessed husband, did not fear the greedy encroachers upon her possessions, she did not seek the patronage of any more powerful person, she did not according to the custom of widows study to collect her things dispersed everywhere into a safe place, but keeping the faith of a most chaste marriage, she arrived from the city of Milan all the way to Ravenna with wonderful fervor to pay the service of the funeral. The difficulty of so long a journey did not deter her, the fear of losing her possession could not retain her, the love of relatives or fellow citizens in the city of Milan did not bind her, the most immense fury of the consul did not disturb her from the borders of Ravenna. For thither her spirit, raised up, tended from the marrow, where she had known her most blessed husband to have preceded, death being already trodden under foot. For where her treasure was, there also was her heart (Matth. XVI). She rejoiced that he was already living in the habitation, she grieved that she still remained in exile.

Ad hoc illa toto mentis desiderio anhelabat in via quo ille jam delectabiliter fruebatur in patria. Gaudebat ab hominibus uxor martyris appellari, sed multo inenarrabilius aestuabat eadem martyrii gloria coronari. Unde non dubitandum est quod ipsum beatissimum virum suum quotidie speciali devotionis familiaritate deposceret, quatenus ejus sacratissimis precibus ad martyrii palmam pertingere mereretur, ut nimirum quos immaculatos hic mutuae charitatis devinxerat thalamus, non dispar in supernae beatitudinis gloria jungeret et triumphus, et, quia duo fuerant in carne una, uniti fierent etiam in corona. Quapropter cum a Christianis qui tunc era Ravennae, esset prohibita ne sanctum corpus auferret, et hac intentione deposita ad propria remearet, incurrit in homines idololatras Silvano sacrificantes, qui deponentes eam de sagmario hortabantur ut cum ipsis epularetur de his quae erant Silvano immolata.

Sed quid tu, beata Valeria? Nunquid poteris vestigia viri tui relinquere, et erectum jam in coelestibus animum diabolicis suggestionibus inclinare? Nunquid poteris, educata in fide catholica, quod in tranquillitate didicisti carnificum terrore postponere, et positum supra firmam petram fidei fundamentum quolibet trepidationis turbine violare? Age, age, beata Valeria! eia, nobilis matrona! nunc viri tui documenta viriliter recole, et quid tibi tanti doctoris magisterium praestiterit declara. Ait enim: Christiana sum, et non licet mihi de sacrificiis Silvani vestri manducare. At illi haec audientes tanta eam caede mactaverunt, ut vix seminecem eam sui homines ad Mediolanensem urbem perducerent, ita ut intra triduum beata Valeria migraret ad Dominum. O quam ineffabiliter divinae dispensationis ordo disponitur! quam misericorditer humanae conditionis series variatur! Mulier virum de paradiso ejecit (Gen. III); vir mulierem ad paradisi patriam revocavit. Illa, ut homo deciperetur, diabolo facta est instrumentum; iste, ut mulier coronaretur, imitabile praebuit virtutis exemplum. Antiqua mulier pomum vetitum comedendo miserabilis jejunii se fame multavit; nova vero mulier ab idolothytis se abstinendo aeternae satietatis sibi convivium praeparavit. Illa, fructu arboris delectata, beatae amoenitatis ostium seris concupiscentiae sibi exiendo [exeundo] damnavit; ista, esum carnium aspernata, sempiternae viriditatis pascua clavibus sibi continentiae patefecit. Ecce liquido patet quam 80 conspicua morum honestate vir sanctus in tranquillitate claruerit, qui et beatissimam conjugem ad tantae perfectionis culmen eduxit.

To this she gasped with the whole desire of her mind on the way, where he was already delectably enjoying himself in the fatherland. She rejoiced to be called the wife of a martyr by men, but much more ineffably she was burning to be crowned with the same glory of martyrdom. Whence it is not to be doubted that she daily requested her most blessed husband himself with special familiarity of devotion, that by his most sacred prayers she might merit to reach the palm of martyrdom, so that namely those whom the immaculate chamber of mutual charity had bound here, a not dissimilar triumph should join in the glory of heavenly beatitude, and, because they had been two in one flesh, they should become united also in the crown. Wherefore when she was prohibited by the Christians who were then at Ravenna from taking away the holy body, and having deposited this intention she was returning to her own places, she ran into idolatrous men sacrificing to Silvanus, who, taking her down from the pack-saddle, exhorted her to feast with them upon those things which had been immolated to Silvanus.

But what about you, blessed Valeria? Will you not be able to leave the footsteps of your husband, and to incline your mind, already raised in heavenly things, to diabolical suggestions? Will you be able, educated in the Catholic faith, to postpone what you learned in tranquility because of the terror of the executioners, and to violate the foundation of faith placed upon a firm rock by any whirlwind of trepidation? Come, come, blessed Valeria! hey, noble matron! now manfully recall the documents of your husband, and declare what the mastery of such a great teacher provided for you. For she said: 'I am a Christian, and it is not allowed for me to eat from the sacrifices of your Silvanus.' But they hearing these things slaughtered her with such great slaughter, that her people with difficulty brought her half-dead to the city of Milan, so that within three days the blessed Valeria migrated to the Lord. Oh, how ineffably the order of divine dispensation is arranged! how mercifully the series of human condition is varied! A woman cast the man out of paradise (Gen. III); a man recalled the woman to the fatherland of paradise. She, that the man might be deceived, was made an instrument for the devil; he, that the woman might be crowned, provided an imitable example of virtue. The ancient woman by eating the forbidden apple mulcted herself with the hunger of a miserable fast; but the new woman by abstaining from things sacrificed to idols prepared for herself the banquet of eternal satiety. The former, delighted by the fruit of the tree, condemned for herself the door of blessed pleasantness by the bars of concupiscence in going out; the latter, having spurned the eating of meats, opened for herself the pastures of everlasting greenness with the keys of continence. Behold it is clearly evident with how conspicuous an honesty of manners the holy man shone in tranquility, who also led his most blessed spouse to such a summit of perfection.

Si enim ab illo studere avaritiae didicisset, nequaquam sua omnia pro sola sepultura efferendi [venerandi] cadaveris contempsisset. Si luxuriosis cum eo fuisset usa conviviis, nimirum itinere fatigata proclivius acquiesceret refici quam verberibus usque ad mortis confinium laniari. Et, ut breviter cuncta concludam, nisi pacis tempore per omnia didicisset vivere Christo, in persecutionis articulo nequaquam potuisset mori pro Christo. Sed quoniam interrogata Valeria, cujus virtutis excellentissimus vir ejus ante certamen exstiterit, assertionis suae testimonium breviter reddidit; jam accedant et alii testes. Ut probetur quam honeste vixere parentes, ad testimonium vocentur haeredes. Verisimile quippe est ut quidquid virtutis in sanctorum filiis cernitur totum ab ipsis parentibus traditum fuisse credatur.

Igitur beatissimi Gervasius et Protasius, utroque parente non dicam orbati, sed potius splendidissima eorum morte feliciter illustrati, sicut in sancta eorum refertur historia, nihil terrenum nihilque carnale concupiscentes, sed in uno se coenaculo concludentes, per decem annos lectioni et orationi vacaverunt. Considerate, fratres charissimi, inaestimabilem paternae institutionis laudem, perpendite mirabilem rigidae censurae traditionem, notate relictum pupillis novae conversationis exemplum, animadvertite evidentissimum paternae severitatis indicium. Solet inter fratres communis substantia divisionis fieri et discordiae causa; inter istos autem dividenda quidem haereditas aderat; duorum tamen corda una charitas replebat. De populosa urbe faciunt eremum, diversorium habitandi vertunt in oratorium. Solent etiam adolescentuli, amissis parentibus, per proprii arbitrii libertatem luxuriose diffluere, et quasi jam sui juris libera voluptatum suarum licenter sibi frena laxare, excedentes siquidem rectitudinis metam in eo quod licet, omnes qui existimant licere quodlibet. Isti vero angelicae indolis pueri, non venturae adhuc vitae solliciti, terrenarum rerum opumve sibi provident sumptum, non morte dissolvendae carnalis copulae ullum pepigere conjugium, non equis frementibus delectantur, non deliciarum lasciviis resolvuntur, non pretiosis vestibus adornari inaniter concupiscunt. Mundani strepitus negotia fugiunt, terrenarum rerum divitias aspernantur, transitoriae dignitatis culmina respuunt, carnalis illecebrae blandimenta contemnunt. Et non solum aliena non ambiunt, sed et omnia sua prodiga misericordiae largitate dispergunt.

For if she had learned from him to study avarice, she would in no way have despised all her things for only the burial of his cadaver to be venerated. If she had used luxurious banquets with him, doubtless being fatigued by the journey she would more easily have acquiesced to be refreshed than to be lacerated by scourges even to the limit of death. And, to conclude all things briefly, unless in the time of peace she had learned to live for Christ through all things, in the moment of persecution she could in no way have been able to die for Christ. But since Valeria, being questioned, briefly returned the testimony of her assertion, what virtue his most excellent husband had before the contest; now let other witnesses also approach. That it may be proved how honestly the parents lived, let the heirs be called to testimony. For it is likely that whatever virtue is discerned in the sons of the saints should be believed to have been entirely handed down by the parents themselves.

Therefore the most blessed Gervase and Protase, not to say bereaved of both parents, but rather happily illustrated by their most splendid death, as is told in their holy history, lusting for nothing earthly and nothing carnal, but concluding themselves in one upper room, vacated themselves for ten years to reading and prayer. Consider, most dear brothers, the inestimable praise of paternal instruction, weigh the wonderful tradition of rigid censure, note the example of a new conversation left to the orphans, observe the most evident indication of paternal severity. Common substance is accustomed to become the cause of division and discord among brothers; among these, however, a heritage to be divided was present; yet one charity filled the hearts of the two. From a populous city they make a desert, they turn a dwelling of habitation into an oratory. Young men are also accustomed, their parents being lost, to flow down luxuriously through the liberty of their own judgment, and as if already of their own right freely to loosen the reins of their pleasures for themselves, all who think whatever is allowed exceeding namely the limit of rectitude in that which is allowed. But these boys of angelic nature, not solicitous for the life yet to come, provide for themselves the expense of earthly things or resources, they did not strike any marriage of carnal copulation to be dissolved by death, they are not delighted by neighing horses, they are not dissolved by the lasciviousness of delights, they do not vainly lust to be adorned with precious garments. They flee the businesses of worldly noise, they spurn the riches of earthly things, they reject the summits of transitory dignity, they despise the allurements of carnal enticement. And not only do they not go about after the things of others, but they even disperse all their own by a prodigal largess of mercy.

De tota mundi latitudine unam sibi glebam angustissimi carceris eligunt, ubi, collectis a vanitate mundi undique sensibus, solam Creatoris sui speciem medullitus contemplantur. Ad illum, claustra jam carnis excedentes, assiduae meditationis studio spiritum dirigunt, ad illum amoris nimii facibus accensi totis visceribus inardescunt. Erat quippe utriusque mens in superno desiderio anxia, a concupiscentiis terrenis aliena; amor namque verus, qui hanc repleverat, in fletibus cruciabat. Sed, dum in tali ardore cruciarentur, ipsis suis cruciatibus 81 pascebantur, et tandiu in admirabili hujus conversationis fervore persistunt, donec gloriosa parentum secuti vestigia pro fide Christi martyrio coronantur. Nimirum quorum imitati sunt exempla vivendo et a quibus in terra sunt carnaliter editi, eorum sunt collegio in coelesti beatitudine sociati; et quos carnalis propagatio junxit, meritorum inaequalitas non divisit; et quo eos ordine in mundum natura produxit, eo etiam ad coelestia divina illos gratia sublimavit. Hi, videlicet qui genuere, praecedunt; qui vero geniti sunt recto eos ordine subsequuntur.

O beata familia, quae Aegyptum deserens, tam strenue Rubrum mare pertransiit, et facto agmine ad repromissionis terram triumphando pervenit! O generosa progenies, quae nascendo quidem de terra traxit originem, sed vivifice moriendo ad coelestem transire meruit dignitatem, quam nobilitas morum ad nobilitatem transtulit angelorum! Quam ardua domus illa fuit, quae tot clarissimos cives ad supernam Hierusalem transmittere meruit! Quae enim civitas, quamlibet excelsa turritis moenibus, hujus domunculae dignitatem excellere poterit, quae coeli digna vocabulo copiosam martyrum turbam felici in se habitatione continuit? Quos totus mundus tenere dignus non fuit, hos domus illa sub unis foribus clausit. Nam et Apostolus, cum de sanctis martyribus loqueretur, protinus addidit, dicens: «Quibus dignus non erat mundus (Hebr. XI).»

Gaude igitur Ravenna, urbs clarissima, tantorum martyrum pretioso sanguine purpurata, quae, licet ex his quatuor solius beati Vitalis sacratissimum corpus corporaliter teneas, nequaquam tamen a reliquis tribus per occultae virtutis mysterium vacas. Nam si beata Valeria cum viro suo, Scriptura teste, fuit in carne una (Gen. II), necessario sequitur ut unius carnis una sit sepultura. Et cum legamus: «Quod Deus conjunxit, homo non separet (Matth. XIX),» nos etiam gaudentes dicamus quia quod Deus, qui est aeterna vita, conjunxit, temporalis mors interveniens non divisit.

From the whole breadth of the world they choose for themselves one clod of a most narrow prison, where, their senses being collected on every side from the vanity of the world, they contemplate from the marrow the species of their Creator alone. To Him, now exceeding the enclosures of the flesh, they direct their spirit by the study of assiduous meditation, to Him kindled by the torches of excessive love they grow hot with all their bowels. For the mind of each was anxious in heavenly desire, alien from earthly concupiscences; for true love, which had filled this, tortured them in weepings. But, while they were tortured in such ardor, they were fed by those very tortures of theirs, and they persist so long in the wonderful fervor of this conversation, until following the glorious footsteps of their parents they are crowned by martyrdom for the faith of Christ. Doubtless they whose examples they imitated in living and by whom they were carnally brought forth on earth, are associated with their company in heavenly beatitude; and those whom carnal propagation joined, inequality of merits did not divide; and in what order nature produced them into the world, in that also divine grace sublimated them to heavenly things. These, namely those who begot them, precede; those who were begotten follow them in right order.

O blessed family, which deserting Egypt, so strenuously passed through the Red Sea, and the army being made arrived triumphing at the land of promise! O noble progeny, which by being born indeed drew its origin from the earth, but by dying vivifically merited to pass to heavenly dignity, which nobility of manners transferred to the nobility of the angels! How arduous was that house, which merited to transmit so many most famous citizens to the heavenly Jerusalem! For what city, however high with turreted walls, will be able to excel the dignity of this little house, which, worthy of the name of heaven, contained a copious crowd of martyrs in a happy habitation in itself? Those whom the whole world was not worthy to hold, that house closed under one door. For also the Apostle, when he was speaking of the holy martyrs, immediately added, saying: 'Of whom the world was not worthy (Hebr. XI).'

Rejoice therefore Ravenna, most famous city, empurpled by the precious blood of so many martyrs, which, although from these four you hold the most sacred body of the blessed Vitalis alone bodily, yet you are in no way vacant of the other three through the mystery of hidden virtue. For if the blessed Valeria with her husband, Scripture being witness, was in one flesh (Gen. II), it necessarily follows that of one flesh there is one burial. And when we read: 'What God has joined, let not man separate (Matth. XIX),' let us also say rejoicing that what God, who is eternal life, joined, temporal death intervening did not divide.

De filiis autem quid aliud dicendum est, nisi quia qui beatissimo genitori insolubilibus naturae vinculis sunt connexi nullatenus ab eo locali potuerunt interstitio separari? Legitur autem quia Adam, cum primum uxorem vidit, protinus dixit: «Hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis, et caro de carne mea (Gen. II).» Si ergo Eva, quia de viri latere est formata, os ex ossibus ejus et caro de carne ejus dicitur, cur non et filii, qui de lumbis patris exierunt, eadem et ossa et carnem cum patre habere dicantur? Licet ergo sejuncti videantur per intervalla locorum, per occultum tamen mysticae virtutis juncti sunt sacramentum.

Gaude igitur, nobilis urbs Ravenna, et totis in Domino visceribus delectare, quae, licet ardua sis muralis machinae celsitudine, multo tamen excelsior es beatorum martyrum dignitate, lapideis quidem propugnaculis inexpugnabiliter cineta, sed valde inexpugnabilius fortium Christi militum protectione vallata. Quae quodammodo Romanis arcibus amicabiliter aemula, sic per duos praecipuos martyres, Vitalem videlicet et Apollinarem, mater esse meruisti et domina circumpositarum quarumlibet urbium. Sicut illa per duos summos apostolos, Petrum 82 videlicet et Paulum, totius orbis sibi vindicat principatum, quasi caput reliquis civitatibus facta, ita coruscas duorum splendore sanctorum, velut humana facies geminorum luminibus oculorum. Laetare igitur et exsulta, quia quae daemonum antea fueras delubrum, nunc per respectum divinae gratiae coelestium senatorum facta es capitolium, et quae prius male fecunda in filiis tuis innumeras stipulas germinabas inferno, jam per beatorum martyrum merita multos cives parturis coelo. Quae enim prae confusione virorum antiqua fueras Babylonia, ipsa per novitatem virtutum nova Hierusalem facta es vivis nimirum lapidibus adornata, ut jam populo tuo non immerito per Paulum dicatur: «Jam non estis hospites et advenae, sed estis cives sanctorum et domestici Dei (Ephes. II);» et per Petrum: «Vos estis genus electum, regale sacerdotium, gens sancta, populus acquisitionis (I Petr. II).» Nec leve tibi datum est divinae dilectionis indicium in eo quod beatus Vitalis etiam post felicem transitum suum in te voluit habere sepulcrum. Non est passus ex te suum corpus auferri, quia noluit te patrocinii sui protectione destitui. In qua re tibi utique magis quam uxori beatissimae praestitit, qui, dum tuae utilitati consuluit, sanctae voluntati ejus non acquievit. Scriptum namque est quia sancta Valeria, dum beati Vitalis vellet corpus auferre, a Christianis prohibita est et saepe in visionibus ab ipso admonita ne sanctum corpus a malo homine bene positum violaret.

Concerning the sons, moreover, what else is to be said, except that they who are connected to their most blessed begetter by insoluble bonds of nature could in no way be separated from him by a local interval? Moreover it is read that Adam, when he first saw his wife, immediately said: 'This now is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh (Gen. II).' If therefore Eve, because she was formed from the side of the man, is called bone from his bones and flesh from his flesh, why should not also the sons, who went out from the loins of the father, be said to have the same bones and flesh with the father? Although therefore they seem set apart by intervals of places, yet they are joined by the hidden sacrament of mystical virtue.

Rejoice therefore, noble city of Ravenna, and delight with all your bowels in the Lord, you who, although you are arduous with the loftiness of mural machine, are yet much higher by the dignity of the blessed martyrs, girt indeed with stony ramparts inexpugnably, but much more inexpugnably walled by the protection of the strong soldiers of Christ. You who in a certain way amicably emulate the Roman citadels, thus through two principal martyrs, namely Vitalis and Apollinaris, you merited to be the mother and mistress of any surrounding cities. Just as that city [Rome] through two highest apostles, namely Peter and Paul, vindicates for itself the principality of the whole world, being made as it were the head to the remaining cities, so you sparkle with the splendor of two saints, like a human face with the twin lights of eyes. Rejoice therefore and exult, because you who had before been a shrine of demons, now through the respect of divine grace have been made a capitol of heavenly senators, and you who before being wickedly fertile produced innumerable stubbles for hell in your sons, now through the merits of the blessed martyrs are bringing forth many citizens for heaven. For you who had been an ancient Babylon before the confusion of men, have been made a new Jerusalem through the novelty of virtues, adorned namely with living stones, so that already it is said to your people not undeservedly through Paul: 'Now you are not guests and strangers, but you are citizens of the saints and domestics of God (Ephes. II);' and through Peter: 'You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of acquisition (I Pet. II).' Nor was a light indication of divine love given to you in that the blessed Vitalis even after his happy passage wished to have his sepulcher in you. He did not allow his body to be taken away from you, because he did not wish you to be destitute of the protection of his patronage. In which matter he provided for you more than for his most blessed wife, who, while he consulted your utility, did not acquiesce to her holy will. For it is written that the holy Valeria, while she wished to take away the body of the blessed Vitalis, was prohibited by the Christians and often admonished in visions by himself lest she should violate the holy body well placed by a bad man.

Certe non possum dicere, fratres mei, quam jucunde, quam delectabiliter certamen hujus pugnae considero, quam avidissime totos interiorum luminum radios ad spectaculum sanctae contentionis expando. Perpendo diversam litigantium aciem; hinc videlicet civitatem, inde unam aspicio mulierem; in medio vero positum corpus sancti Vitalis materia est et causa certaminis. Quaeque pars suis allegationibus utitur, et causam suam diversa juris ratione tuetur. Illa repetit jus antiquae possessionis, ista opponit titulum divinae concessionis; illa conqueritur sibi violenter ablatum; ista e contrario asserit eis divina sibi benignitate donatum. Dicit illa: Rem proximi tui non concupiscas (Exod. XX). Respondet ista: Quod tuum non est, ne repetas (Luc. VI). Dicit illa: Sed mihi est, inquit, dotalis matrimonii lege conjunctus. Respondet ista: Quia et mihi est pretioso martyrii sanguine foederatus. Habuisti tu, dum licuit, conjugem tuum; liceat et mihi habere sine molestia martyrem meum. Tibi enim est carnalis copulae glutino sociatus, in me est triumphalis martyrii gloria coronatus. Audi Apostolum dicentem: «Mulier alligata est legi quandiu vir ejus vivit; cum autem obierit vir ejus, soluta est a lege viri (I Cor. VII),» Si ergo tu soluta es a viri lege, quae in carne adhuc vivis, quomodo illi, qui ad coelestia regna jam transiit, innectere vinculum quaeris? Sed ad dirimendum hujusmodi contentionis sanctae litigium, accessit ipse beatus martyr in medium, et venerandae uxoris querelae imposuit modum. Et qui eatenus fuerat materia contentionis sequester et mediator factus est pacis.

Sed dum vobis, fratres charissimi, ista dicimus, illud etiam ad mentem reducitur quod patriarcham 83 Jacob fecisse Scriptura sacra testatur. Legitur enim quia, cum appropinquare cerneret mortis diem, vocavit filium suum Joseph, et dixit ad eum: «Si inveni gratiam in conspectu tuo, pone manum sub femore meo, et facies mihi misericordiam et veritatem ut non sepelias me in Aegypto, sed dormiam cum patribus meis, et auferas me de hac terra, condasque in sepulcro majorum.» Cui respondit Joseph: «Ego faciam quod jussisti.» Et ille: «Jura ergo, inquit, mihi (Gen. XLVII).» Quo jurante, adoravit Israel Deum. Quid est hoc, fratres mei? Quid sibi vult a tanto viro tam anxia sepeliendi corporis sollicitudo? Si enim hoc ex humana consuetudine metiamur, profecto nihil dignum tanta propheticae mentis excellentia reperimus. Ubicunque enim corpus humanum sepelitur, non ideo vel minus perfecta, vel minus gloriosa ejus resurrectio futura procul dubio creditur.

Certainly I cannot say, my brothers, how pleasantly, how delectably I consider the contest of this fight, how most avidly I expand all the rays of my interior lights to the spectacle of this holy contention. I weigh the diverse line of the litigants; on this side namely I behold a city, on that side a single woman; but the body of Saint Vitalis placed in the middle is the matter and cause of the contest. Each part uses its own allegations, and defends its cause by a diverse reason of law. The former repeats the right of ancient possession, the latter opposes the title of divine concession; the former complains that it was violently taken away from her; the latter on the contrary asserts that it was given to them by divine benignity. The former says: 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's thing (Exod. XX).' The latter responds: 'What is not yours, do not seek back (Luc. VI).' The former says: 'But he is joined to me by the law of dotal marriage.' The latter responds: 'Because he is also allied to me by the precious blood of martyrdom.' You had your husband while it was allowed; let it be allowed for me also to have my martyr without molestation. For he is associated with you by the glue of carnal copulation, in me he is crowned by the glory of triumphal martyrdom. Hear the Apostle saying: 'A woman is bound to the law as long as her husband lives; but when her husband dies, she is loosed from the law of the husband (I Cor. VII).' If therefore you are loosed from the law of the husband, you who still live in the flesh, how do you seek to weave a bond for him who has already passed to the heavenly kingdoms? But to settle the dispute of this kind of holy contention, the blessed martyr himself came forward into the midst, and imposed a limit upon the complaint of the venerable wife. And he who had hitherto been the matter of contention became the sequester and mediator of peace.

But while we say these things to you, most dear brothers, that also is brought back to mind which sacred Scripture testifies that the patriarch Jacob did. For it is read that when he saw the day of death approaching, he called his son Joseph and said to him: 'If I have found grace in your sight, place your hand under my thigh, and you shall do mercy and truth to me so that you do not bury me in Egypt, but I may sleep with my fathers, and you shall carry me out of this land, and hide me in the sepulcher of my ancestors.' To whom Joseph responded: 'I will do what you have commanded.' And he: 'Swear therefore to me (Gen. XLVII).' Upon his swearing, Israel adored God. What is this, my brothers? What does such an anxious solicitude for the body to be buried mean from so great a man? For if we measure this from human custom, certainly we find nothing worthy of such great excellence of a prophetic mind. For wherever a human body is buried, its future resurrection is believed without doubt not to be for that reason either less perfect or less glorious.

Sed si mystici sacramenti profunditas in hujus dubietatis caligine requiratur, perspicuum lumen intelligentiae ipsi qui invenerit orietur. Cadavera quippe mortuorum, peccata significant injuste viventium. Sicut enim post contactum corporum mortuorum lex praecipit homines purificari (Num. XIX), ita etiam post perpetrationem delictorum jubemur per poenitentiam ablui. Hinc nimirum illa sententia dicta est: «Qui baptizatur a mortuo, et iterum tangit illum, quid prodest lavatio ejus?» (Eccli. XXXIV.) Baptizatur quippe a mortuo, qui mundatur fletibus a peccato; sed post baptismum mortuum tangit, qui culpam post lacrymas repetit. Sepultura vero mortuorum remissionem significat peccatorum. Unde per Prophetam dicitur: «Beati, quorum remissae sunt iniquitates, et quorum tecta sunt peccata (Psal. XXXI).» Ubi ergo sepelienda erant cadavera patriarcharum, nisi in ea terra ubi ille erat crucifigendus cujus sanguine facta est remissio peccatorum? Quae ergo causa fuit ut patriarcha Jacob sepeliretur in Chananaeorum terra, eadem fuit ut beatus Vitalis sepulcrum sibi specialiter eligeret in urbe Ravenna. Sicut enim ille per sepulturam sui corporis, remissionem peccatorum in illis mundi finibus, quia ibi Dominus erat crucifigendus, significavit esse futuram, ita iste hanc felicissimam urbem ad baptismi gratiam et ad fidem Christi cognovit divinitus esse vocandam.

Quapropter obsecro vos et admoneo, dilectissimi fratres, tantam dignitatem, quam gratuito Dei munere suscepistis, assidua meditatione recolite, et dignas tantis beneficiis gratias non solum ore vel corde, sed etiam dignis operibus referre curate, dicentes semper cum Propheta: «Quid retribuam Domino, pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi? Calicem salutaris accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo (Psal. CXV).» Non abhorreat momentaneae potionis amaritudinem bibere qui ad perpetuae incolumitatis dulcedinem desiderat pervenire. Qui vult ascribi inter milites Christi nunc se accingat viriliter ad conflictum, ut post peractam victoriam jam emeritus beatae quietis accipiat municipium. Nunc se praeparet congredi, ut merito valeat post victoriam coronari. «Non enim coronabitur, nisi qui legitime certaverit (II Tim. II).» Nam delicatus est miles qui ante vult vincere quam incipiat dimicare, qui vult sine pugna victoriam, aut sine victoria anhelat ad palmam. Non, fratres, non potest fieri ut ad magna praemia perveniatur, nisi per magnos labores. Sicut enim per Apostolum dicitur: «Per multas tribulationes oportet nos ingredi in regnum Dei (Act. XIV).» Unde ipsa Veritas dicit: «A tempore Joannis Baptistae regnum Dei vim patitur, et violenti rapiunt illud (Matth. XI).»

But if the depth of the mystic sacrament be required in the gloom of this doubtfulness, a clear light of understanding will rise for him who finds it. For the cadavers of the dead signify the sins of those living unjustly. For just as after the contact of dead bodies the law commands men to be purified (Num. XIX), so also after the perpetration of crimes we are commanded to be washed through penance. Hence namely that sentence was said: 'He who is baptized from the dead, and touches him again, what does his washing profit him?' (Eccli. XXXIV.) For he is baptized from the dead who is cleansed by weepings from sin; but after baptism he touches the dead who repeats the fault after tears. But the burial of the dead signifies the remission of sins. Whence it is said through the Prophet: 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered (Psal. XXXI).' Where therefore were the cadavers of the patriarchs to be buried, except in that land where He was to be crucified by whose blood the remission of sins was made? What therefore was the cause that the patriarch Jacob was buried in the land of the Canaanites, was the same why the blessed Vitalis specifically chose a sepulcher for himself in the city of Ravenna. For just as the former by the burial of his body signified that the remission of sins was about to be in those borders of the world, because there the Lord was to be crucified, so the latter knew that this most happy city was to be called by divine appointment to the grace of baptism and to the faith of Christ.

Therefore I beseech and admonish you, most beloved brothers, reflect with assiduous meditation upon so great a dignity, which you have received by the gratuitous gift of God, and take care to return thanks worthy of such benefits, not only with mouth or heart, but also with worthy works, saying always with the Prophet: "What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that he hath rendered to me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord (Psal. CXV)." Let him not abhor to drink the bitterness of a momentary potion, who desires to arrive at the sweetness of perpetual safety. He who wishes to be enrolled among the soldiers of Christ, let him now gird himself manfully for the conflict, so that after the victory has been achieved, now emeritus, he may receive the citizenship of blessed rest. Let him now prepare himself to join battle, that he may be worthily able to be crowned after the victory. "For he also that striveth for the mastery, is not crowned, except he strive lawfully (II Tim. II)." For he is a delicate soldier who wishes to conquer before he begins to fight, who wishes for victory without a battle, or without a victory pants for the palm. No, brothers, it cannot be that great rewards are reached, except through great labors. For as it is said by the Apostle: "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God (Act. XIV)." Whence Truth itself says: "From the days of John the Baptist the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away (Matth. XI)."

Caduca ergo saeculi hujus, fratres mei, blandimenta despicite, ad coelestis patriae gaudia medullitus anhelate, carnis incentiva reprimite, mandata Dei, quae ante percipitis, operibus adimplete; ab amore Dei nulla vos mundi prosperitas retrahat, nulla vos adversitas frangat, non corpus vestrum luxuria polluat, non invidiae flamma consumat, non vos elatio inflet, non terrenarum rerum cupiditas gravet, non vos ab amore proximi iracundia dividat, non vos pravorum vitiis dilectio inordinata conjungat; transacta mala dignae poenitentiae fletibus tergite, imminentia vero cauta provisione vitate, venturum terribilem Judicem ante mentis oculos ponite, districti examinis sententiam trepidi formidate, quatenus, quem nunc venturum metuentes, humanitatis ejus crucem bajulare satagitis, in majestatis suae gloria postmodum venientem securi et alacres videatis Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula seculorum. Amen.

Sermo XVII

bis. II. DE SANCTO VITALE MARTYRE. (XXVIII APR.)

Ad pulchrum nimis spectaculum et delectabile ad videndum, fratres charissimi, hodierna festivitate convenimus, et admirabilem triumphalis pugnae victoriam oculis fidei contemplati sumus. Vidimus enim antiquum draconem cum homine congredi; vidimus venenosam civilitatem melioris serpentis astutia superari; vidimus illum qui vincere consueverat, enerviter cedere; vidimus eum qui prostratus jacuerat, ereptis spoliis de triumphato hoste victoriam reportare. Illinc perspeximus rugientem leonem in Christi gregem immaniter fremere; hinc vero novum David raptam ovem de cruentis avidissimi praedonis dentibus liberare. Ille siquidem aridis faucibus inhians humanum sanguinem sitiebat, et aperto suae malitiae gutture ovem Christi deglutire jam coeperat; iste vero gladio spiritus, quod est verbum Dei (Ephes. VI), ejus ora transfigens, captam praedam violenter eripuit et per foramen, quod in maxilla Leviathan fecerat, ab ipso pene mortis barathro ad vitae pascua revocavit. Unde bene ad beatum Job voce Dominica dicitur: «Nunquid armilla perforabis maxillam Leviathan? (Job XL.)» Per Leviathan quippe, qui additamentum eorum dicitur, cautus ille devorator humani generis designatur, qui, dum se divinitatem homini addere spopondit, immortalitatem sustulit; qui praevaricationis quoque culpam, quam primo homini propinavit, dum se sequentibus pessima persuasione multiplicat, poenas eis sine cessatione coacervat.

Despise therefore the fleeting allurements of this world, my brothers, pant from the marrow of your bones for the joys of the heavenly homeland, repress the incitements of the flesh, fulfill with works the commandments of God which you receive; let no prosperity of the world draw you back from the love of God, let no adversity break you, let not luxury pollute your body, let not the flame of envy consume you, let not elation puff you up, let not the covetousness of earthly things weigh you down, let not anger divide you from the love of your neighbor, let not inordinate affection join you to the vices of the wicked; wipe away past evils with the tears of worthy penance, avoid imminent ones with cautious provision, place the terrible Judge who is to come before the eyes of your mind, fear with trembling the sentence of the strict examination, so that, fearing Him who is now to come, while you busy yourselves carrying the cross of His humanity, you may afterward see Him coming in the glory of His majesty, secure and joyful, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermon XVII

bis. II. ON SAINT VITALIS THE MARTYR. (APRIL 28)

To a spectacle exceedingly beautiful and delightful to see, most dear brothers, we have gathered on today's feast, and we have contemplated with the eyes of faith the admirable victory of the triumphal struggle. For we saw the ancient dragon join battle with man; we saw the poisonous shrewdness overcome by the astuteness of a better serpent; we saw him who had been accustomed to conquer, yield feebly; we saw him who had lain prostrate, report victory over the triumphed enemy with the spoils snatched away. On that side we perceived the roaring lion raging immensely against the flock of Christ; on this side, indeed, a new David liberating the snatched sheep from the bloody teeth of the most greedy predator. For that one, gaping with dry jaws, thirsted for human blood, and with the throat of his malice opened, had already begun to swallow the sheep of Christ; but this one, transfixing his mouth with the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God (Ephes. VI), violently snatched the captured prey and, through the hole which he had made in the jaw of Leviathan, called it back from the very abyss of death to the pastures of life. Whence it is well said to the blessed Job by the Divine voice: "Wilt thou bore through the jaw of Leviathan with a ring? (Job XL.)" For by Leviathan, who is called "their addition," that cautious devourer of the human race is designated, who, while he promised to add divinity to man, took away immortality; who also, while he multiplies in those who follow him by his most wicked persuasion the fault of prevarication which he offered to the first man, heaps up punishments for them without ceasing.

Armilla igitur Dominus per electos suos maxillam Leviathan perforat, quia ineffabili misericordiae suae potentia malitiae antiqui hostis obviat, ut aliquando eos etiam quos jam cepit amittat, et quasi ab ore illius cadunt qui post perpetratas culpas ad innocentiam redeunt. Quis enim, ore illius semel captus, maxillam ejus evaderet, si perforata non esset? An non beatum Ursicinum tunc momordit, cum post nimia tormenta carnificis gladium formidavit? An non illum in ore ad plenum tenuit, quando idolis sacrificare consensit? Sed, dum per exhortationem Vitalis gloriosissimi martyris ad vitam rediit, Leviathan iste eum aliquo modo quasi per maxillae suae foramen amisit. Sicut enim in sancta gestorum illius narratur historia, cum post nimia tormenta decollandus venisset Ursicinus ad palmam, expavit, et dum vellet evadere, exclamavit Vitalis, dicens: Noli, noli, Ursicine medice, qui alios curare consuevisti, te ipsum aeternae mortis jaculo vulnerare; et qui per passiones nimias venisti ad palmam, ne perdas coronam a Domino tibi paratam. O mirabilis Christi miles, qui, dum adhuc terrenae militiae armis accingitur, divino inflammante Spiritu, repente ad spirituale certamen fervidus animatur! O novus et incomparabilis tiro, qui, in ipso tirocinii sui initio medias frementium hostium catervas irrumpens, in ipsum tyrannum imperterritus irruit, et commilitonem suum de sub ipsis trucidantium gladiis liberavit! Doctus et ferventissimus miles Christi, in hostem impetum faciens, repulit captivum, ad se socium traxit, et detrimentum suae militiae restituto milite reparavit.

Considerare libet, fratres charissimi, mentem beati Vitalis quantus ardor charitatis accenderat, qui, ut fraternae saluti consuleret, sibimet ipsi periculum non timebat Balteo siquidem militari praecinctus, claris militiae titulis insignitus, in ordine equitum scriptus, chlamyde bellica decoratus, de semetipso manebat omnino securus. Sed cum videret interioris militiae socium in tentationum bello deprehensum sub ingruenti telorum grandine jam deficere, et amisso patientiae clypeo super nudum hostiles gladios imminere, protinus in medium prosilit, et semetipsum periculo mortis objecit, imitatus imperatorem suum, videlicet humani generis Redemptorem, qui, ut nos viveremus, mortem pertulit, et, ut nos de jugo diabolicae potestatis eriperet, a membris diaboli se crucifigi permisit. Aderat quidem corpore in obsequio consularis, mente vero jam transierat ad militiam Creatoris.

Therefore the Lord, through His elect, bores through the jaw of Leviathan with a ring, because by the ineffable power of His mercy He meets the malice of the ancient enemy, so that at some time He may lose even those whom He has already captured, and they fall as it were from his mouth who, after perpetrating faults, return to innocence. For who, once captured by his mouth, would escape his jaw, if it were not bored through? Did he not then bite the blessed Ursicinus, when after excessive torments he feared the sword of the executioner? Did he not hold him fully in his mouth, when he consented to sacrifice to idols? But, while through the exhortation of Vitalis, the most glorious martyr, he returned to life, this Leviathan lost him in some way as if through the hole of his jaw. For as it is narrated in the holy history of his deeds, when after excessive torments Ursicinus had come to the palm of being beheaded, he was terrified, and while he wished to escape, Vitalis cried out, saying: "Do not, do not, Ursicinus the physician, who have been accustomed to cure others, wound yourself with the arrow of eternal death; and you who through excessive passions have come to the palm, do not lose the crown prepared for you by the Lord." O wonderful soldier of Christ, who, while he is still girded with the arms of earthly warfare, by the inflaming Divine Spirit, is suddenly fervently animated for the spiritual contest! O new and incomparable recruit, who, in the very beginning of his recruitment, bursting into the midst of the ranks of the roaring enemies, rushed undaunted upon the tyrant himself, and liberated his fellow soldier from under the very swords of those who were slaughtering! The learned and most fervent soldier of Christ, making an attack upon the enemy, repelled the captive, drew his companion to himself, and repaired the loss of his warfare with the soldier restored.

It is pleasant to consider, most dear brothers, with how great an ardor of charity the mind of the blessed Vitalis had been inflamed, who, in order to consult for the salvation of his brother, did not fear danger for himself. Indeed, girded with a military belt, distinguished by the famous titles of warfare, enrolled in the order of knights, decorated with a warlike cloak, he remained entirely secure concerning himself. But when he saw a companion of the interior warfare, caught in the war of temptations, now failing under a falling hail of darts, and, with the shield of patience lost, the hostile swords looming over him naked, he immediately leaped into the midst, and objected himself to the danger of death, imitating his emperor, namely the Redeemer of the human race, who, so that we might live, endured death, and, so that he might snatch us from the yoke of diabolical power, permitted himself to be crucified by the members of the devil. He was indeed present in body in the service of the consul, but in mind he had already crossed over to the service of the Creator.

Accipiebat ab illo praesentis vitae stipendium, exspectabat ab isto perpetuum futurae beatitudinis municipatum. Suscipiebat ab illo donativum, quod temporaliter videbat; sperabat ab isto bravium, quod necdum percurso stadio videre non poterat, dicens cum Apostolo: «Non contemplantibus nobis quae videntur. Sed quae videntur temporalia sunt, quae autem non videntur aeterna sunt (II Cor. IV).» Exhibebat illi officii militaris obsequium; servabat isti immobile perfectae fidei fundamentum, custodiens jam Evangelium illud: «Reddite quae sunt Caesaris, Caesari; et quae sunt Dei, Deo (Luc. XX).» O quam efficax et viva vox de ejus ore tunc prodiit! quam fervida charitatis flamma de vaporato ejus pectore aestuavit! Noli, noli, inquit, Ursicine medice, qui alios curare consuevisti, te ipsum aeternae mortis jaculo vulnerare. Nec in auditoris cor frigida descendere potuit, quae per exhortationis verba ex ipso Spiritus sancti igne processit. Audiens enim haec Ursicinus, genu posito, spiculatorem ut feriret hortatur, agens poenitentiam quod expavisset Christi martyrium.

Sed dum beati Ursicini lapsus auditur, alicujus animus fortasse movetur cur omnipotens Deus eos quos in perpetuum elegit, quos per abundantiorem gratiam etiam ad martyrii culmen assumit, in periculosi timoris voraginem cadere impediente carnis infirmitate permittit. Unde, quia satisfieri citius credimus, breviter respondemus. Sancti etenim viri, qui per divini muneris gratiam ad perfectionis culmen elevantur, quandiu in hac vita sunt, ne aliqua elatione superbiant, quibusdam tentationibus reprimuntur, ut nequaquam tantum proficere valeant quantum volunt. Ne igitur extollantur per superbiae vitium, fit in eis quaedam mensura virtutum. Hinc est enim quod Elias, dum tot virtutibus in alta profecisset, quadam mensura suspensus est, dum Jezabelem, quamvis reginam, tamen mulierculam fugit (III Reg. XIX). Perpendo quippe hunc mirae virtutis virum ignem de coelo trahere, et secundo quinquagenarios viros cum suis sequacibus petitione subita concremare (IV Reg. I), verbo coelos ad pluvias aperire, mortuos suscitantem, ventura quoque prophetiae spiritu praevidentem. Sed rursus animo occurrit quia, postquam haec omnia mirabiliter fecit, muliebri pavore perterritus ante unam mulierculam fugit. Considero virum timore perculsum de manu Domini mortem petere nec accipere, de manu mulieris mortem fugiendo vitare. Quaerebat enim mortem, dum fugeret dicens: «Sufficit mihi, Domine, tolle animam meam. Neque enim melior sum quam patres mei (III Reg. X).» Unde ergo sic potens ut tot illas virtutes faciat?

He was receiving from the former the stipend of the present life; he was expecting from the latter the perpetual citizenship of future blessedness. He was receiving from the former the gift which he saw temporally; he was hoping from the latter the prize which, with the race-course not yet run, he could not yet see, saying with the Apostle: "While we look not at the things which are seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal (II Cor. IV)." He was exhibiting to the former the obedience of military office; he was preserving for the latter the immovable foundation of perfect faith, observing already that Gospel: "Render the things that are Caesar's, to Caesar; and the things that are God's, to God (Luc. XX)." O how efficacious and living a voice then came forth from his mouth! how fervent a flame of charity surged from his warmed breast! "Do not, do not," he said, "Ursicinus the physician, who have been accustomed to cure others, wound yourself with the arrow of eternal death." Nor could that descend cold into the heart of the hearer, which through the words of exhortation proceeded from the very fire of the Holy Spirit. For Ursicinus, hearing these things, with his knee placed on the ground, exhorted the executioner to strike him, performing penance for having feared the martyrdom of Christ.

But while the lapse of the blessed Ursicinus is heard of, someone's mind might perhaps be moved as to why almighty God permits those whom He has chosen forever, whom by a more abundant grace He also assumes to the summit of martyrdom, to fall into the abyss of dangerous fear through the impeding infirmity of the flesh. Whence, because we believe satisfaction can be given more quickly, we reply briefly. For holy men, who are raised to the summit of perfection through the grace of the divine gift, as long as they are in this life, are repressed by certain temptations lest they be proud with any elation, so that they may by no means be able to progress as much as they wish. Lest therefore they be extolled through the vice of pride, there is made in them a certain measure of virtues. For from this it is that Elijah, although he had progressed so far in high virtues, was suspended by a certain measure, while he fled from Jezebel, who though a queen, was yet but a little woman (III Kings XIX). I consider indeed this man of wonderful virtue drawing fire from heaven, and twice consuming the commanders of fifty with their followers at a sudden petition (IV Kings I), opening the heavens for rains by a word, raising the dead, and also foreseeing future things by the spirit of prophecy. But again it occurs to the mind that, after he did all these things wonderfully, terrified by a woman's fear he fled before one little woman. I consider the man smitten by fear asking for death from the hand of the Lord and not receiving it, and avoiding death by fleeing from the hand of a woman. For he was seeking death while he fled, saying: "It is enough for me, Lord, take away my soul. For I am no better than my fathers (III Kings X)." Whence then was he so powerful that he performed so many virtues?

Unde tam charus Deo ut etiam mortuis vitam restituat, nisi quia profundo divinae dispensationis consilio mensurae occulti libraminis appenduntur, ut ipsi summae religionis viri et multum valeant per divinam potentiam, et rursus quadam mensura moderati sint per infirmitatem suam? In illis namque virtutibus Elias quid de Domino acceperat, in istis vero infirmitatibus quid de se poterat, agnoscebat. Illa potentia virtus exstitit, ista vero infirmitas custos virtutis fuit In illis virtutibus ostendebat quid acceperat, in istis virtutibus hoc quod acceperat custodiebat. In miraculis Elias monstrabatur, in infirmitatibus servabatur. Scriptum quippe est quia dixit Jezabel. «Haec faciant mihi dii, inquit, et haec addant, nisi hac hora cras posuero animam tuam sicut animam unius ex illis. Et audivit Elias, et timuit, ac fugiens abiit quocunque eum ferebat voluntas (Ibid.).» O violentiam verbi! o formidinis eminentiam! Audito mulieris verbo, fugit Elias; et fugit, non uno, non duobus, non tribus diebus, sed potius quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus! Ingressus enim sermo mulieris in cor ejus quasi quidam gladius fuerat, et amisso rationis consilio quid ageret nesciebat. Tanti itineris spatio metu exagitante jactatus, velut cum secundo talibus cursu impulsae navis arborem ex adverso turbo corripuit impetumque reflexit, ita prophetae animum virtutis velo navigantem mulieris perculit sermo, totamque ejus navim per omnes formidinis fluctus, turbato rectore, jactavit. Quid ergo tu, Elia? Tu enim es qui verbo clauseras coelum et fraudaveras imbres, qui mandaveras aeri et divinos ignes eduxeras, qui falsos salubriter interfici jusseras sacerdotes, qui constanter in faciem exprobaveras regem quod ipse et domus sua populum evertit Israel, qui dixeras: «Vivit Dominus, si erit pluvia, aut ros, nisi in verbo oris mei (III Reg. XVII),» qui domum viduae, spicarum aream et torcular feceras olei, qui in omnibus imperaveras elementis, sermonem nunc expaves meretricis?

Quid ergo mirum, fratres mei, si post nimia tormenta beatus Ursicinus gladium consularis expavit, quandoquidem ipse eximius prophetarum Elias, vix alicui impar sanctorum, non viri, sed feminae, non viso gladio, sed audito minarum verbo, tot dierum curriculo velut cervus percussus sagitta formidinis fugit? Quanti autem meriti Elias fuerit, hinc cito colligitur, si evangelica auctoritas de eo ad testimonium deducatur. Ad Zachariam namque de Joannis promissione angelus dicit: «Ipse praecedet ante illum in spiritu et virtute Eliae (Luc. I).» De eodem quoque Joanne Dominus testatur, dicens: «Inter natos mulierum non surrexit major Joanne Baptista (Matth. XI).» Si ergo inter homines major Joanne nemo surrexit, quis major Elia, qui unam virtutem et unum cum Joanne spiritum habuit?

Whence so dear to God that he restored life even to the dead, except because in the deep counsel of divine dispensation the measures of a hidden balance are weighed, so that these men of the highest religion might both be very powerful through divine power, and again be moderated by a certain measure through their own infirmity? For in those virtues Elijah recognized what he had received from the Lord, but in these infirmities what he was capable of from himself. That power was virtue, but this infirmity was the guardian of virtue. In those virtues he showed what he had received, in these infirmities he guarded that which he had received. In miracles Elijah was shown, in infirmities he was preserved. For it is written that Jezebel said: "May the gods do such things to me, she said, and add such things, unless by this hour tomorrow I set thy soul as the soul of one of them. And Elijah heard, and feared, and fleeing went wherever his will carried him (Ibid.)." O violence of the word! o eminence of dread! At the hearing of a woman's word, Elijah fled; and he fled, not for one, not for two, not for three days, but rather for forty days and forty nights! For the speech of the woman entering into his heart had been like a certain sword, and with the counsel of reason lost he knew not what he should do. Tossed by fear agitating him through the space of so great a journey, just as when a whirlwind has seized from the opposite side the mast of a ship driven with a favorable course and reflected the impetus, so the woman's speech smote the mind of the prophet sailing with the sail of virtue, and tossed his whole ship through all the waves of dread, with the pilot disturbed. What therefore of you, Elijah? Are you indeed he who by a word had shut heaven and withheld the rains, who had commanded the air and brought forth divine fires, who had ordered the false priests to be wholesomely slain, who had constantly reproached the king to his face that he and his house overturned the people of Israel, who had said: "As the Lord liveth, if there shall be rain, or dew, but according to the word of my mouth (III Kings XVII)," who had made of the widow's house a floor of ears of corn and a press of oil, who had commanded all the elements, and now you dread the word of a harlot?

What wonder then, my brothers, if after excessive torments the blessed Ursicinus dreaded the sword of the consul, when indeed that eminent one among the prophets, Elijah, hardly unequal to any of the saints, fled for a course of so many days like a stag struck by the arrow of dread, not at the sight of a man, but of a woman, not at the sight of a sword, but at the hearing of a word of threats? How great indeed the merit of Elijah was is quickly gathered from here, if evangelical authority is brought forward for testimony concerning him. For to Zechariah, concerning the promise of John, the angel says: "He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luc. I)." Concerning the same John the Lord also testifies, saying: "Among those born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist (Matth. XI)." If therefore among men no one has risen greater than John, who is greater than Elijah, who had one virtue and one spirit with John?

Sed dum timentem Ursicinum timido Elia defendere nitimur, etiam infirmitas summi pastoris Ecclesiae ad memoriam revocatur. Una enim mulieris voce perculsus, dum mori timuit, vitam negavit. Et tunc Petrus in terra de Domino proferre testimonium non praesumpsit (Matth. XXVII), cum latro eum in cruce confiteri non timuit (Luc. XXIII). Qua in re considerandum nobis est cur omnipotens Deus eum quem cunctae Ecclesiae praeficere disposuit, ancillae vocem pertimescere et se negare permisit. Quod nimirum magnae actum pietatis dispensatione cognoscimus, ut is, qui futurus erat pastor Ecclesiae, in sua culpa disceret qualiter aliis misereri debuisset. Prius itaque eum ostendit sibi et tunc praeposuit caeteris, ut ex sua infirmitate cognosceret qualiter aliena infirma toleraret. Ad hoc etiam Scriptura sacra virorum talium, id est, Eliae et Petri lapsus indicat, ut ruina majorum sit cautela minorum. Ad hoc vero sanctorum et poenitentia insinuatur et venia, ut spes sit pereuntium recuperatio perditorum. De statu ergo suo Petro cadente nemo superbiat; de lapsu etiam suo Petro surgente nemo desperet.

E contra, quam mirabiliter Scriptura divina superbos premit, quae humiles erigit. Unam namque rem gestam retulit; et diverso modo superbos quidem ad humilitatis formidinem, humiles vero ad spei fiduciam revocavit. Inaestimabile nempe est hoc novum medicamenti genus, quod uno eodemque ordine positum et premendo exsiccat tumida, et sublevando infundit arentia. De majorum namque nos lapsu terruit, sed de reparatione roboravit. Sic quippe semper, sic nos divinae dispensationis misericordia et superbientes reprimit, et ne ad desperationem corruamus fulcit.

Considerare libet intra munitum gratiae sinum quanto Deus misericordiae favore nos continet. Ecce qui se de virtutibus extollit, per vitium ad humilitatem redit. Qui gratia acceptae virtutis extollitur, non gladio, sed, ut ita dixerim, medicamento vulneratur. Quid enim virtus, nisi medicamentum? Et quid vitium, nisi vulnus? Quia ergo nos de medicamento vulnus facimus, facit Deus de vulnere medicamentum, ut qui virtute percutimur, vitio curemur. Nos namque virtutum dona retorquemus in usum vitiorum, ille vitiorum mala assumit in arte virtutum; ut qui humilitatem curantis fugimus, salutem concedenti inseparabiliter haereamus.

But while we strive to defend the fearing Ursicinus with the fearful Elijah, the infirmity of the supreme pastor of the Church is also recalled to memory. For smitten by the voice of one woman, while he feared to die, he denied life. And then Peter on earth did not presume to offer testimony concerning the Lord (Matth. XXVII), when the thief on the cross did not fear to confess Him (Luc. XXIII). In which matter we must consider why almighty God permitted him whom He disposed to set over the whole Church to fear the voice of a maidservant and to deny Him. Which indeed we recognize as done by the dispensation of a great piety, so that he, who was to be the pastor of the Church, might learn in his own fault how he ought to have mercy on others. Therefore He first showed him to himself and then set him over the rest, so that from his own infirmity he might recognize how he should tolerate the infirmities of others. To this also the holy Scripture indicates the lapses of such men, that is, of Elijah and Peter, so that the ruin of the greater may be the caution of the lesser. To this indeed both the penance and the pardon of the saints are insinuated, so that there may be hope for those perishing, a recovery of the lost. Let no one therefore be proud when Peter falls from his state; let no one also despair when Peter rises from his lapse.

On the contrary, how wonderfully divine Scripture presses down the proud, which raises up the humble. For it related one thing done; and in a diverse way it recalled the proud indeed to the dread of humility, but the humble to the confidence of hope. Inestimable indeed is this new kind of medicine, which, placed in one and the same order, both dries up the swollen things by pressing, and pours into the withered things by lifting up. For it terrified us by the lapse of the greater, but strengthened us by their reparation. Thus indeed always, thus the mercy of divine dispensation both represses those becoming proud, and supports us lest we fall into despair.

It is pleasant to consider within the fortified bosom of grace with how much favor of mercy God contains us. Behold, he who extols himself for his virtues, returns to humility through a vice. He who is extolled by the grace of a virtue received, is wounded not by a sword, but, as I might so say, by a medicine. For what is virtue, if not medicine? And what is vice, if not a wound? Because therefore we make a wound out of the medicine, God makes a medicine out of the wound, so that we who are struck by virtue may be cured by vice. For we distort the gifts of virtues into the use of vices, but He assumes the evils of vices into the art of virtues; so that we who flee the humility of the one who cures, may inseparably cling to the one who grants salvation.

Sed inter haec sciendum est quod plerique hominum quo in multis corruunt arctius ligantur, cumque eos antiquus hostis ex uno vitio percutit, ut concidant, ex alio quoque ligat, ne surgant. Consideret ergo homo cum quo adversario bellum gerat, et si jam se in aliquo deliquisse perpendit, saltem post culpam pertimescat, ut studiose vitentur vulnera quibus frequenter interficitur, quod valde rarum est ut hostis noster electorum aegritudini etiam vulneribus medeatur. Erudiendos enim electos suos Dominus saepe tentatori subjicit. Sicut post paradisi claustra, post tertii coeli secreta, ne revelationum magnitudine Paulus apostolus extolli potuisset, ei Satanae angelus datus est. Ecce qui paradisi prius secreta considerat, ad semetipsum rediens, contra carnis bellum laborat, legem aliam in membris sustinet, cujus rebellione fatigari spiritus legem docet. Post donationem ergo muneris Deus hominem probat, quia et collato munere sublevat, et abstracto paululum, ipsum sibi hominem demonstrat. Quod eo usque procul dubio patimur, quo, detersa funditus labe peccati, ad promissae incorruptionis substantiam reformemur. Sed ipsa hac tentatione disponitur ut qui elati perire poterant, humiliati a perditione serventur.

Secreto ergo dispensationis ordine, unde saevire permittitur iniquitas diaboli, inde pie perficitur benignitas Dei. Qua adversarius noster inde obtemperat nutibus supernae gratiae, unde exercet iram nequissimae voluntatis suae. Nam, dum beatus Ursicinus tot pro amore Christi tormenta perferret, et inter lacerantes manus carnificum immobilis permaneret, subripere sibi de fortitudinis suae constantia elatio forsitan potuisset, quae illum multo profundius mergeret, nisi eum levior tentationis aura pulsasset. Postquam enim Dominus mentes nostras ad perfectionen roborat, mox visitando tentationum aculeis probat. Qui et accedendo corda nostra ad virtutes provenit, et recedendo concuti tentatione permittit. Nam si post virtutum munera nulla nos tentationis aura concuteret, hoc jam se habere animus ex semetipso jactaret. Ut ergo et firmitatis dona utiliter habeat et infirmitatem suam humiliter recognoscat, per accessum gratiae ad alia sustollitur, et per recessum quid sit ex semetipso salubriter experitur.

But among these things it must be known that most of men are bound more tightly by that in which they fall in many ways, and when the ancient enemy strikes them from one vice, that they may fall down, he also binds them from another, lest they rise. Let a man therefore consider with what adversary he wages war, and if he already weighs that he has failed in something, let him at least fear after the fault, so that the wounds by which he is frequently killed may be studiously avoided, for it is very rare that our enemy cures the sickness of the elect even with wounds. For the Lord often subjects His elect to the tempter to be instructed. Just as after the enclosures of paradise, after the secrets of the third heaven, lest the apostle Paul could have been extolled by the magnitude of the revelations, there was given to him an angel of Satan. Behold, he who first considers the secrets of paradise, returning to himself, labors against the war of the flesh, sustains another law in his members, by whose rebellion he teaches the law of the spirit to be fatigued. After the donation of the gift, therefore, God proves the man, because He both lifts him up by the conferred gift, and by withdrawing it a little, He shows the man to himself. Which we undoubtedly suffer until we are reformed to the substance of promised incorruption, with the stain of sin thoroughly wiped away. But by this very temptation it is disposed that they who, being elated, could perish, being humbled, are preserved from perdition.

Therefore by a secret order of dispensation, whence the iniquity of the devil is permitted to rage, thence the benignity of God is piously perfected. By which our adversary obeys the nods of supernal grace from there, whence he exercises the wrath of his most wicked will. For while the blessed Ursicinus was enduring so many torments for the love of Christ, and remained immovable among the lacerating hands of the executioners, elation could perhaps have stolen upon him from the constancy of his fortitude, which would merge him much more deeply, unless a lighter breeze of temptation had struck him. For after the Lord strengthens our minds for perfection, He soon proves them by visiting with the stings of temptations. He who both by approaching anticipates our hearts to virtues, and by receding permits them to be shaken by temptation. For if after the gifts of virtues no breeze of temptation should shake us, the mind would already boast that it has this from itself. So that therefore it may both usefully have the gifts of firmness and humbly recognize its own infirmity, through the access of grace it is raised to other things, and through the recess it wholesomely experiences what it is of itself.

Quod bene nobis etiam ex historia sacrae lectionis innuitur, qua Salomon et divinitus accepisse sapientiam dicitur, et tamen post acceptam eamdem sapientiam meretricum statim pulsatus quaestione memoratur (III Reg. III). Mox enim ut gratiam tantae revelationis accepit, certamen turpium mulierum pertulit, quia nimirum saepe, cum mentem nostram concessis virtutibus respectio intimae claritatis illuminat, hanc etiam lubricae cogitationes turbant, ut quem sublevata impenso munere perfectionis exaltat, etiam tentatione pulsata quid sit inveniat.

Videbat autem beatus martyr Ursicinus omnes circa se crudeliter fremere, ad expugnandum Christi nomen irrationabiliter insanire, cunctos per abrupta erroris in praecipitium tendere, omnes veritatis viam, amissis cordis oculis ignorare, et idcirco tanta cogitatione potuisset forsitan arbitrari neminem superesse qui suis meritis valeret aequari. Quapropter divina illum pietas cadere ad momentum voluit, et mox de terrena militia hominem qui eum erigeret divinitus excitavit, ut, dum de saeculari etiam ordine multo se fortiorem et robustiorem cerneret, ad cognoscendam infirmitatem suam cervicem cordis humiliter inclinaret. Hinc est quod Elias, de quo superius dictum est, dum Jezabel territus fugeret, et se solum Deo ex omnibus superstitem aestimaret, dicens: «Domine, prophetas tuos occiderunt, altaria tua demolierunt, et ego relictus sum solus, et quaerunt animam meam (III Reg. XIX);» ut elationem mentis ejus reprimeret Dominus, respondit dicens: «Reliqui mihi septem millia virorum, qui non curvaverunt genua sua ante Baal (Ibid.).» Certum quippe est quod cordis oculos exstinguit qui, cum recte agit, considerare proximorum merita negligit. At contra, magno humilitatis radio semetipsum illuminat qui aliorum bona subtiliter pensat; quia dum ea quae ipse fecerit, facta foris et ab aliis conspicit, eum, qui de singularitate intus erumpere nititur, superbiae tumorem premit. «Reliqui, inquit, mihi septem millia virorum, qui non curvaverunt genua sua ante Baal,» ut, dum non solum se remansisse cognosceret, elationis gloriam, quae ei de singularitate surgebat, inclinaret. Propheta nempe erat, et saepe mysteria superna cognoverat. Quid ergo difficile fuit agnoscere in mundo fideles Deo famulos et alios remansisse? Sed hinc solerter intuendum est oculum cordis elatio quam nequiter claudat, quia qui humilis et occulta Dei noverat, elatus et aperta nesciebat. Ut ergo B. Ursicinus barathrum elationis evaderet, dignum fuit ut cadendo disceret quia non sua, sed aliena virtute stetisset. Permisit divina clementia excelsam paradisi cedrum leviter concuti, ne irruente validiori turbine radicitus potuisset evelli.

Which is well hinted to us also from the history of the sacred reading, in which Solomon is said to have received wisdom divinely, and yet after receiving the same wisdom he is remembered to have been immediately struck by the question of harlots (III Kings III). For as soon as he received the grace of so great a revelation, he endured the contest of shameful women, because undoubtedly often, when the respect of inner clarity illuminates our mind with granted virtues, slippery thoughts also disturb it, so that he whom perfection exalts, having been raised by the bestowed gift, also finds what he is, having been struck by temptation.

Moreover, the blessed martyr Ursicinus saw everyone around him raging cruelly, insanely and irrationally striving to destroy the name of Christ, all tending toward the precipice through the abrupt ways of error, all, having lost the eyes of the heart, ignorant of the way of truth; and therefore he could perhaps have thought with such reflection that no one remained who could be equaled by his merits. Wherefore divine piety willed him to fall for a moment, and soon He divinely excited a man from the earthly warfare who should raise him up, so that, while he perceived one even from a secular order to be much stronger and more robust than himself, he might humbly bow the neck of his heart to recognize his own infirmity. Hence it is that Elijah, of whom it was said above, while he fled terrified from Jezebel, and estimated himself alone to be left to God out of all, saying: "Lord, they have slain thy prophets, they have thrown down thy altars, and I am left alone, and they seek my life (III Kings XIX)"; in order to repress the elation of his mind, the Lord answered saying: "I have left me seven thousand men, who have not bowed their knees before Baal (Ibid.)." It is indeed certain that he extinguishes the eyes of the heart who, when he acts rightly, neglects to consider the merits of his neighbors. But on the contrary, he illuminates himself with a great ray of humility who subtly ponders the good things of others; because while he beholds those things which he himself has done, done also abroad and by others, the swelling of pride is pressed down in him who strives to break forth from singularity within. "I have left," He said, "to me seven thousand men, who have not bowed their knees before Baal," so that, while he recognized that he had not alone remained, he might bow the glory of elation which was rising in him from singularity. He was indeed a prophet, and had often known supernal mysteries. Why then was it difficult to recognize that other faithful servants to God had remained in the world? But from here it must be shrewdly considered how wickedly elation closes the eye of the heart, because he who, being humble, had known the hidden things of God, being elated, knew not even the open things. Therefore, so that the blessed Ursicinus might escape the abyss of elation, it was worthy that by falling he should learn that he had stood not by his own, but by another's virtue. Divine clemency permitted the lofty cedar of paradise to be lightly shaken, lest at the rushing in of a stronger whirlwind it could have been uprooted.

Permisit militem suum vel ad momentum hostilibus gladiis cedere, ut poenitens fugae ferventius potuisset animosum pectus ad rediviva rursus certamina reparare, quatenus de fugiente protinus insequentem, de victo faceret versa vice victorem. Amando Ursicinus carnem suam Christum deserere voluit, sed rursus timendo Christum ipsam carnem ultro feriendam carnificibus tradidit. Ex quo peccavit, ex eo emendare protinus studuit. Unde admisit culpam, inde sustinuit poenitentiarn. Consolatus enim Ursicinus, genu terrae posito, spiculatorem ut feriret hortatur, agens poenitentiarn quod expavisset Christi martyrium.

Discite, fratres, discite perfectam poenitentiam agere; discite reatus vestri maculas plenae compunctionis fletibus emundare, videlicet, ut consummata mala perfecta diluant lamenta, ne plus instringamini in debito perpetrati operis, et minus solvatis in fletibus satisfactionis. Scriptum quippe est: «Potum dedit nobis in lacrymis in mensura (Psal. LXXIX),» ut nimirum uniuscujusque mens tantum poenitendo compunctionis suae bibat lacrymas, quantum se meminit a Deo aruisse per culpas. Timendo quippe B. Ursicinus mortem, vitae jam deserebat auctorem, sed cum verba salutiferae exhortationis accepit, protinus erigens se contra seipsam carnem morti ultroneus tradidit, cujus vivendi amore peccavit. Non denique restitit, non in verba se praesumptoriae defensionis erexit, non poenitentiam distulit, sed mox salutifero corripientis imperio humiliter obedivit. Sunt namque nonnulli qui, cum de ore proximorum verba correptionis audiunt, mox in iram prorumpunt, vitio tumidae elationis inflantur, et capitalis inimicitiae facibus inardescunt: Hi nimirum de medicamento salutis materiam sibi faciunt aegritudinis, et curandi cauterium, vulnerandi instrumentum. Qui multo deterius per defensionis audaciam Deum ad iracundiam provocant, quam tunc cum communi carnis infirmitate peccabant. Plus enim delinquit quis defendendo peccatum quam faciendo peccatum. Peccare quippe humanum est, peccatum vero defendere diabolicum est. Unde et Psalmista divinum adjutorium humiliter implorat, dicens: «Non absorbeat me profundum, neque urgeat super me puteus os suum (Psal. LXVIII).» Profundo quippe absorbetur qui in gravis peccati praecipitium labitur. Sed tunc super eum puteus, ne exire valeat, os suum claudit, cum se peccator in defensionis audaciam pergendo profundius mergit. Unde et primus homo tunc quasi in profundum corruit, cum vetitum pomum per inobedientiam comedit. Tunc super eum os suum puteus clausit, cum culpam suam defendere audacter praesumpsit.

He permitted His soldier to yield even for a moment to hostile swords, so that, repenting of the flight, he might have been able to repair his courageous breast more fervently for renewed contests again, so as to make of the one fleeing immediately one following, and of the conquered, by a change of turn, a conqueror. By loving his own flesh Ursicinus wished to desert Christ, but again by fearing Christ he delivered that same flesh of his own accord to be struck by the executioners. From that in which he sinned, from that he immediately studied to emend. Whence he admitted the fault, thence he sustained the penance. For Ursicinus, being consoled, with his knee placed on the ground, exhorted the executioner to strike, performing penance for having feared the martyrdom of Christ.

Learn, brothers, learn to perform perfect penance; learn to cleanse the stains of your guilt with the tears of full compunction, namely, that perfect laments may wash away completed evils, lest you be more constrained in the debt of the perpetrated work, and pay less in the tears of satisfaction. For it is written: "Thou hast given us to drink in tears in measure (Psal. LXXIX)," so that undoubtedly the mind of each one may drink the tears of its own compunction in repenting, as much as it remembers to have been dry from God through faults. For the blessed Ursicinus, by fearing death, was already deserting the Author of life, but when he received the words of wholesome exhortation, immediately raising himself against himself, he delivered his flesh spontaneously to death, through the love of living for which he had sinned. Finally he did not resist, he did not raise himself into words of presumptuous defense, he did not delay penance, but soon humbly obeyed the wholesome command of the one reproving him. For there are some who, when they hear words of correction from the mouth of their neighbors, soon burst into anger, are puffed up by the vice of tumid elation, and burn with the torches of capital enmity: these undoubtedly make for themselves a matter of sickness out of the medicine of salvation, and an instrument of wounding out of the cautery of curing. Who provoke God to anger much more worse through the audacity of defense, than then when they were sinning by the common infirmity of the flesh. For one offends more by defending a sin than by committing a sin. To sin is indeed human, but to defend sin is diabolical. Whence also the Psalmist humbly implores divine help, saying: "Let not the deep swallow me up: and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me (Psal. LXVIII)." For he is swallowed by the deep who falls into the precipice of a grave sin. But then the pit shuts its mouth over him, lest he be able to go out, when the sinner merges himself more deeply by proceeding into the audacity of defense. Whence also the first man then as it were fell into the deep, when he ate the forbidden apple through disobedience. Then the pit shut its mouth over him, when he boldly presumed to defend his fault.

Ait enim: «Mulier, quam dedisti mihi sociam, ipsa mihi dedit de ligno, et comedi (Gen. III).» Qui quidem per timorem semetipsum absconsurus fugerat, sed tamen requisitus innotuit quantum etiam timens tumescebat. Cum etenim ex peccato praesens poena metuitur, et amissa Dei facies non amatur, timor ex tumore est, non ex humilitate. Superbit quippe qui peccatum, si liceat non puniri, non deserit, sed potius defendere tumida elatione praesumit.

Studeamus itaque nunc, dilectissimi, beatorum martyrum virtutes imitari, ut ab Imperatore martyrum cum eisdem mereamur postmodum coronari. Eorum vestigia teneamus in via, quorum societatem habere desideramus in patria. Profecto illic erimus quod sunt, si hic fuerimus quod hic fuerunt. Nam si compatimur, et conregnabimus; si commorimur et convivemus (II Tim. 2). Non ergo dividamur in itinere, si jungi volumus in perventione. Doceat nos B. Vitalis habere zelum rectitudinis, doceat nos B. Ursicinus formam tenere humilitatis; doceat uterque geminae servare vinculum charitatis. Ille quippe geminae charitatis ardore succensus, ut pereuntem proximum liberaret et mundam Deo ejus imaginem redderet, semetipsum omnino despexit, et crudelissimi persecutoris sententiam non expavit. Iste vero corripienti se proximo humiliter paruit, et ad conspectum Creatoris sui quantocius pergere per gladium properavit.

Sed quoniam hunc sermonem de triumpho sancti Vitalis scribere proposuimus, plura tamen occurrente materia de Ursicino locuti sumus, nemo existimet quia de propositae intentionis tramite deviavimus. Cum enim S. Ursicini triumphus attollitur, beatissimi quoque Vitalis praeconium non tacetur. Salus quippe aegri, laus est medici; et peritia discipuli, gloria est praeceptoris. Magnus siquidem ille, qui pro vita mori didicit; sed longe superior qui momentaneam vitam pro aeterna despicere docuit. Fortis ille, qui amarum salutis poculum bibere potuit; sed multo fortior iste, qui eum de ipsis perpetuae mortis faucibus potenter eduxit. Cum ergo triumphalis Ursicini virtus attollitur, gloriosus quoque B. Vitalis honor augetur. Imo quidquid magnum dicitur de utroque, totum ad gloriam Creatoris pertinet utriusque. «Neque enim qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat Deus (I Cor. III).»

For he said: "The woman, whom thou gavest me to be my companion, gave me of the tree, and I did eat (Gen. III)." Who indeed through fear had fled to hide himself, but yet when required he made known how much he was swelling even while fearing. For when from sin the present punishment is feared, and the lost face of God is not loved, the fear is from swelling, not from humility. He is indeed proud who does not desert sin if it be allowed not to be punished, but rather presumes to defend it with tumid elation.

Let us strive therefore now, most beloved, to imitate the virtues of the blessed martyrs, that we may deserve to be crowned afterward by the Emperor of martyrs with the same. Let us keep their footsteps in the way, whose society we desire to have in the homeland. Truly there we shall be what they are, if here we shall have been what they were here. For if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him; if we die with Him, we shall also live with Him (II Tim. 2). Let us not therefore be divided in the journey, if we wish to be joined in the arrival. Let the blessed Vitalis teach us to have the zeal of rectitude, let the blessed Ursicinus teach us to hold the form of humility; let each teach to preserve the bond of twofold charity. For the former, inflamed with the ardor of twofold charity, so that he might liberate his perishing neighbor and return to God His clean image, entirely despised himself, and did not fear the sentence of the most cruel persecutor. But the latter humbly obeyed his neighbor reproving him, and hastened to proceed as quickly as possible to the sight of his Creator by the sword.

But since we proposed to write this sermon concerning the triumph of Saint Vitalis, yet more matter occurring we have spoken concerning Ursicinus, let no one think that we have deviated from the path of our proposed intention. For when the triumph of Saint Ursicinus is extolled, the praise of the most blessed Vitalis is also not silent. For the health of the sick is the praise of the physician; and the skill of the disciple is the glory of the preceptor. Great indeed was the former, who learned to die for life; but far superior was the latter, who taught to despise momentary life for eternal. Strong was the former, who could drink the bitter cup of salvation; but much stronger was the latter, who powerfully led him out from the very jaws of perpetual death. When therefore the triumphal virtue of Ursicinus is extolled, the glorious honor of the blessed Vitalis is also increased. Rather, whatever great thing is said of both, it all pertains to the glory of the Creator of both. "For neither he that planteth is any thing, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase (I Cor. III)."

Inter haec vos, fratres charissimi, ad vosmetipsos redite, actus vestros sollicita examinatione discutite; et qui laudes martyrum libenter auditis, ipsi quoque laudabilem vitam habere curate. «Non est enim speciosa laus in ore peccatoris (Eccli. XV).» Illi nempe sanctos digne laudibus efferunt qui laudabiliter vivunt, et hi fortium virtutes utiliter audiunt quos audita praeconia ad amorem imitationis accendunt «Quaecunque enim scripta sunt, ad nostram doctrinam scripta sunt (Rom. XV).» Quisquis ergo gaudes fortiter egisse martyres Christi, arripe et ipse arma inter milites Christi. Desunt exterius hostes, verte manus in te, et multos seditiosos invenies cives. Doma superbiam, jugula iracundiam, exstingue libidinem, reprime avaritiam, occide invidiam, et, ut breviter cum Apostolo cuncta complectar, Crucifige carnem tuam cum vitiis et concupiscentiis (Gal. V), hoc est fortiter agere, hoc est viriliter dimicare. Nam quid juvat, si circa vallum te non obsideant acies persequentium, et intra urbis moenia grassetur barbaries vitiorum? Imo quid prodest, si membra diaboli tecum exterius non confligant, et ipse diabolus intrinsecus te quieto jure possideat? Nam quicunque ejus voluntati subjecti sunt, quasi quieto ab illo jure possidentur, et superbus eorum rex quadam securitate perfruitur, dum eorum cordibus inconcussa potestate dominatur. Sed cum uniuscujusque spiritus ad Conditoris desiderium recalescit, cum torporem negligentiae deserit, et frigus insensibilitatis pristinae igne sancti amoris succendit, cum libertatis ingenitae meminit, et teneri ab hoste servus erubescit, quia idem hostis se considerat despui, quia vias Dei videt apprehendi, dolet contra se captum reniti, mox zelo accenditur, mox ad certamen movetur, mox contra rebellantem mentem se excitat atque in omni arte lacerationis instigat, ut tentationum jacula intorquendo confodiat cor quod dudum quieto jure possidebat. Quasi dormiebat quippe, dum sopitus in pravo corde quiesceret, sed excitatur in provocatione certaminis, cum jus admiserit perversae dominationis. Scriptum quippe est: «Fili, accedens ad servitutem Dei, sta in justitia et timore, et praepara animam tuam ad tentationem (Eccli. II).» Quisquis enim accingi in divino servitio properat, quid aliud quam se contra antiqui adversarii certamen parat, ut liber in certamine ictus suscipiat, qui quietus sub tyrannide in captivitate serviebat? In hoc certamine, dilectissimi fratres, noster animus se semper exerceat, ad hujus pugnae victoriam mens nostra totis visceribus inardescat. «Non enim coronabitur, nisi qui legitime certaverit (II Tim. II);» quatenus qui nunc imitando beatos martyres legitime decertare contendimus, percepta corona victoriae in aeternum cum ipso rege martyrum ineffabiliter exsultemus. Qui trinus et unus Deus vivit et gloriatur [regnat] per infinita saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Among these things, most dear brothers, return to yourselves, discuss your acts with solicitous examination; and you who gladly hear the praises of martyrs, take care yourselves also to have a laudable life. "For praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner (Eccli. XV)." Those indeed worthily extol the saints with praises who live laudably, and these usefully hear the virtues of the strong whom the heard praises inflame to the love of imitation. "For what things soever were written, were written for our learning (Rom. XV)." Whoever therefore rejoices that the martyrs of Christ have acted strongly, seize yourself also arms among the soldiers of Christ. External enemies are lacking, turn your hands upon yourself, and you will find many seditious citizens. Tame pride, strangle anger, extinguish lust, repress avarice, slay envy, and, to embrace all briefly with the Apostle, crucify your flesh with its vices and concupiscences (Gal. V); this is to act strongly, this is to fight manfully. For what does it profit if the ranks of persecutors do not besiege you around the rampart, and the barbarity of vices ranges within the walls of the city? Rather, what does it benefit if the members of the devil do not conflict with you externally, and the devil himself possesses you internally by quiet right? For whoever are subject to his will, are possessed as if by quiet right by him, and their proud king enjoys a certain security while he dominates their hearts with unshaken power. But when the spirit of each one grows warm again toward the desire of the Founder, when it deserts the torpor of negligence, and kindles the cold of its former insensibility with the fire of holy love, when it remembers its innate liberty, and being a slave held by the enemy it blushes, because the same enemy considers himself despised, because he sees the ways of God being apprehended, he grieves that his captive resists him, soon he is inflamed with zeal, soon he is moved to contest, soon he excites himself against the rebelling mind and instigates in every art of laceration, so that by twisting the darts of temptations he may transfix the heart which he recently possessed by quiet right. He was as it were sleeping while he rested, lulled in the wicked heart, but he is excited in the provocation of the struggle, when he has admitted the right of perverted domination. For it is written: "Son, coming to the service of God, stand in justice and fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation (Eccli. II)." For whoever hastens to be girded in the divine service, what else does he do than prepare himself against the struggle of the ancient adversary, so that being free he may receive blows in the struggle, who quiet was serving in captivity under tyranny? In this struggle, most dear brothers, let our mind always exercise itself, let our mind be inflamed with all its innermost parts for the victory of this fight. "For he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully (II Tim. II)"; so that we who now contend to fight lawfully by imitating the blessed martyrs, having perceived the crown of victory, may ineffably exult forever with the King of martyrs himself. Who, triune and one God, lives and glories [reigns] for infinite ages of ages. Amen.

MAIUS. III. Sermo de Inventione sanctae Crucis. XI. Sermo de S. Anthimo martyre. XIV. Sermo de S. Bonifacio martyre. XV. Sermo de Spiritu sancto et ejus gratia.

Sermo XVIII.

DE INVENTIONE SANCTAE CRUCIS. (III MAII.)

Hoc denique salutis humanae vexillum non solum lex per quasdam typicas intelligentias et aenigmata praefigurat, sed et omnium prophetarum oracula et cuncta veteris instrumenti veneratur auctoritas. Quae est enim sacri eloquii pagina, quae crucis mysterium non redoleat, et ad hoc, quasi ad totius humanae salutis caput atque principium, non intendat? Ex quibus nimirum non otiosum credimus, si aliqua hic testimonia, quae crucis mysterium innuant, proferamus, ut per ea quae hic brevi sermone perstringimus ad illa etiam quae tacentur, facilioris intelligentiae aditum praebeamus. Primus igitur Abraham accedat in medium, qui dum immolare Deo filium voluit, cuncta pene per ordinem passionis Dominicae sacramenta signavit. Sicut enim Abraham, qui pater excelsus dicitur, unicum et dilectum filium offerre Deo non dubitavit, ita et summus Pater unigenitum dilectumque Filium pro nobis omnibus tradidit. Sicut Isaac ipse sibi ligna portavit quibus erat imponendus, ita quoque Christus crucis suae gestavit in humeris lignum, in quo erat pro nostra salute passurus. Duo autem servi illi procul dimissi Judaeos significant, qui, cum serviliter viverent et carnaliter saperent, non intellexerunt altissimam humilitatem [paupertatem] Christi, atque ideo non ascenderunt in montem, locum videlicet sacrificii. Cur autem duo servi, nisi quia, peccante Salomone, ex una Israelitica plebe duo facti sunt populi? Quibus utique saepe per prophetam dicitur: «Adversatrix Israel, et praevaricatrix Juda (Jer. III).» Asinus autem ille quo tunc utebatur Abraham, insensata erat stultitia Judaeorum. Illa plane bruta stultitia omnia sacramenta portabat, quae tamen quid ferret, velut irrationale animal, ignorabat. Jam vero quid est quod dictum est eis: «Exspectate hic cum asino, postquam autem adoraverimus, revertemur ad vos?» (Gen. XXII.) Audi Apostolum: «Caecitas, inquit, ex parte Israel facta est, ut plenitudo gentium intraret, et sic omnis Israel salvus fieret (Rom. XI).» Quid est enim quod dicitur: «Caecitas ex parte Israel facta est?» Hoc est videlicet: «Exspectate hic cum asino.» Ut plenitudo gentium intraret, hoc est, postquam adoraverimus, ubi videlicet sacrificium Dominicae crucis impletum per omnes gentes fuerit praedicatum. Quod autem sequitur: «Et sic omnis Israel salvus fiet,» hoc est, revertemur ad vos.

MAY. III. Sermon on the Finding of the Holy Cross. XI. Sermon on St. Anthimus the martyr. XIV. Sermon on St. Boniface the martyr. XV. Sermon on the Holy Spirit and His grace.

Sermon XVIII.

ON THE FINDING OF THE HOLY CROSS. (MAY 3.)

Finally, not only does the law prefigure this banner of human salvation through certain typical understandings and enigmas, but also the oracles of all the prophets and the authority of the entire Old Testament (*veteris instrumenti*) venerates it. For what page of the sacred eloquence is there that does not redolent of the mystery of the cross, and does not intend toward this, as if toward the head and principle of all human salvation? From which, surely, we believe it not idle if we bring forward here some testimonies which intimate the mystery of the cross, so that through those things which we touch upon here in a brief sermon, we may provide an approach of easier understanding also to those things which are kept silent. Therefore, let Abraham first come forward into the midst, who, while he wished to immolate his son to God, signed almost all the sacraments of the Lord's passion in order. For just as Abraham, who is called "exalted father" (*pater excelsus*), did not hesitate to offer his only and beloved son to God, so also the supreme Father delivered His only-begotten and beloved Son for us all. And just as Isaac himself carried for himself the wood upon which he was to be placed, so also Christ bore upon His shoulders the wood of His cross, on which He was to suffer for our salvation. But those two servants dismissed far off signify the Jews, who, since they lived servilely and savored carnally, did not understand the highest humility [poverty] of Christ, and therefore did not ascend into the mountain, namely the place of sacrifice. Why, however, two servants, except because, Solomon sinning, two peoples were made out of the one Israelite folk? To whom indeed it is often said through the prophet: "Adversary Israel, and prevaricating Judah (Jer. III)." But that ass which Abraham then used was the senseless stupidity of the Jews. That plain brute stupidity carried all the sacraments, yet what it bore, like an irrational animal, it did not know. Now indeed, what is it that was said to them: "Wait here with the ass, but after we have worshipped, we will return to you?" (Gen. XXII.) Hear the Apostle: "Blindness," he says, "in part has happened in Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved (Rom. XI)." For what is it that is said: "Blindness in part has happened in Israel?" This is namely: "Wait here with the ass." Until the fullness of the Gentiles should come in, that is, after we have worshipped, where namely the sacrifice of the Lord's cross, having been fulfilled, shall have been preached through all nations. But that which follows: "And so all Israel shall be saved," this is: "we will return to you."

Quid est autem quod aries inter vepres haerens cornibus invenitur, qui pro Isaac immolatus offertur? Crux nempe cornua habet, duo siquidem ligna invicem componuntur, et sic crucis speciem reddunt. Hinc est enim quod de Christo scriptum est: «Cornua sunt in manibus ejus (Hab. III).» Haerens ergo cornibus aries, Christus est crucifixus inter aculeatas et vulnificas Judaeorum iniquitates, sicut ipse per Jeremiam conqueritur, dicens: «Spinis peccatorum suorum circumdedit me populus hic (Jer. XXX).» Peracto sacrificio, dicitur Abrahae, «In semine tuo benedicentur omnes gentes (Gen. XXII),» et postquam Dominus dicit: «Foderunt manus meas et pedes meos (Psal XXI),» paulo post in eodem Psalmo subjicit: «Reminiscentur, et convertentur ad Dominum universi fines terrae, et adorabunt in conspectu ejus omnes patriae gentium, quoniam Domini est regnum, et ipse dominabitur gentium (Ibid.).» Oblato itaque Abraham filio, et pro eo ariete immolato, appellavit nomen loci illius, Dominus videt, quia Redemptor noster, postquam in ara crucis oblatus mortis nostrae debitum solvit, videndum se deinceps fidelium suorum obtutibus praebuit, ut nimirum redempti omnes illum jam per fidem videant, qui eatenus fidei oculos non habebant.

Verum nos dum sacrificantem Abraham aliquanto longiore sermone prosequimur, ab aliis quae dicenda sunt, diutius praepedimur. Hoc nempe crucis mysterium et Jacob figuraliter expressit, cum de Christo inter reliqua verba benedictionis intulit, dicens: «Lavabit in vino stolam suam, et in sanguine uvae pallium suum (Gen. XLIX).» Stola Christi et pallium multitudo est gentium, quas tunc Dominus induit, quando sibi eas per gratiam redemptionis adjunxit, sicut per prophetam pollicetur, dicens: «Vivo ego, dicit Dominus, nisi hos omnes induam sicut vestimentum (Isai. XLIX).» Stolam ergo suam Dominus in vino, et pallium in sanguine uvae lavit, quando sicut botrus in crucis ligno pependit. Tunc enim ex latere ejus sanguis et aqua profluxit. Sed aqua nos abluit, sanguine redemit, nimirum ut exhiberet sibi sponsam non habentem maculam, neque rugam (Ephes. V). Crucis mysterium idem Jacob tunc etiam patenter exhibuit, quando juniorem Ephraim Manasse primogenito praeferens, in modum crucis super eos brachia permutavit (Gen. XLVIII). Per crucem namque factum est ut populus gentium, tanquam primogeniti jure praerepto, populum praecederet Judaeorum.

What, however, is it that a ram is found caught by its horns among the briers, which is offered immolated for Isaac? Surely the cross has horns, for two pieces of wood are composed together, and thus return the appearance of a cross. For from this it is that it is written of Christ: "Horns are in his hands (Hab. III)." Therefore the ram caught by its horns is Christ crucified among the sharp and wound-inflicting iniquities of the Jews, as He Himself complains through Jeremiah, saying: "With the thorns of their sins this people has surrounded me (Jer. XXX)." The sacrifice being completed, it is said to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations be blessed (Gen. XXII)," and after the Lord says: "They have dug my hands and my feet (Psal. XXI)," a little after in the same Psalm he adds: "All the ends of the earth shall remember, and shall be converted to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in his sight, for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he shall have dominion over the nations (Ibid.)." Abraham therefore having offered his son, and the ram having been immolated for him, he called the name of that place, "The Lord seeth," because our Redeemer, after being offered on the altar of the cross He paid the debt of our death, showed Himself henceforth to be seen by the gazes of His faithful, so that surely all the redeemed may now see Him through faith, who until then did not have the eyes of faith.

But while we pursue Abraham sacrificing with a somewhat longer sermon, we are hindered longer from other things which must be said. Indeed, Jacob also expressed this mystery of the cross figuratively when, among the other words of blessing, he brought in concerning Christ, saying: "He shall wash his robe in wine, and his garment in the blood of the grape (Gen. XLIX)." The robe of Christ and the garment is the multitude of nations, which the Lord then put on when He joined them to Himself through the grace of redemption, as He promises through the prophet, saying: "As I live, saith the Lord, unless I put on all these as a garment (Isai. XLIX)." Therefore the Lord washed His robe in wine, and His garment in the blood of the grape, when He hung like a cluster (*botrus*) on the wood of the cross. For then from His side blood and water flowed out. But the water washed us, the blood redeemed us, surely that He might present to Himself a spouse not having spot or wrinkle (Ephes. V). The same Jacob then also patently exhibited the mystery of the cross when, preferring the younger Ephraim to the firstborn Manasseh, he changed his arms in the manner of a cross over them (Gen. XLVIII). For through the cross it was brought about that the people of the Gentiles, as if by the right of the firstborn being snatched away, should precede the people of the Jews.

Illud quoque quod in Exodo legitur, ad Dominicae crucis refertur procul dubio sacramentum. Dixit enim Dominus ad Moysen: «Projice virgam quam in manu gestas, in terram: et projecit, et factus est serpens.» Expavit illico Moyses, et fugit. Et ait illi Dominus: Apprehende caudam ejus; et apprehendit, factaque est iterum virga (Exod. IV). Cuncti liquido novimus quia serpens suasit homini mortem (Gen. III). Ergo mors a serpente. Quis autem virga, nisi Christus, de quo propheta dicit: «Quia egredietur virga de radice Jesse?» (Isai. XI.) Virga itaque in serpentem, Christus in mortem. Moyses autem expavit et fugit, quia suspenso in cruce vel moriente Domino, omnis ille apostolorum numerus tremefactus expavit, et a certae spei ac firmae fidei soliditate recessit. Quia vero cauda extrema pars corporis est, quid nisi finem Dominicae significat passionis? Moyses igitur caudam apprehendit, et nihil in virga ultra serpentis formam apparuit, quia completo Dominicae passionis crucisque mysterio, et fidelis quisque tunc ad fidem rediit, et Christus consumpta morte idipsum in se quod fuerat per resurrectionis gloriam reparavit.

Jam vero quid est quod Israelitica plebs postibus domorum de sanguine agni jubetur imponere (Exod. XII), nisi ut nos praefiguret crucem Christi, qui verus est agnus, in fronte portare? Ad vesperam siquidem immolabatur agnus, et in vespera mundi passus est Christus. Liniuntur utique postes, ne vastator angelus audeat inferre perniciem; et nos crucis vexillum in corde gestamus et fronte, ne repentinus hostis irruens valeat auferre salutem. Unde et securi canimus: «Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, Domine (Psal. IV).» Quod tamen securius digniusque cantamus, si Rubro jam mari transmisso et hoste demerso tympanum cum Maria Moysis sorore deferimus (Exod. XV). Quid est autem tympanum portare? Audi Dominum dicentem: «Qui vult venire post me, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam quotidie, et sequatur me (Luc. IX).» Qui enim carnem suam cum vitiis et concupiscentiis crucifigit (Galat. V), qui membra sua, quae sunt super terram, abstinendo mortificat (Col. III), ille vere cum Maria tympanum portat, quia semetipsum a noxiis terrenae voluptatis humoribus aridum servat. Juxta rationis igitur consequentiam, et hic tympanum crucis mysterium non obscure designat.

That also which is read in Exodus refers without doubt to the sacrament of the Lord's cross. For the Lord said to Moses: "Cast the rod which thou bearest in thy hand upon the earth: and he cast it, and it was made a serpent." Moses immediately feared, and fled. And the Lord said to him: Take hold of its tail; and he took hold, and it was made a rod again (Exod. IV). We all clearly know that the serpent persuaded death to man (Gen. III). Therefore death is from the serpent. But who is the rod, except Christ, of whom the prophet says: "Because a rod shall go forth from the root of Jesse (Isai. XI)?" Therefore the rod into a serpent is Christ into death. But Moses feared and fled, because when the Lord was suspended on the cross or dying, all that number of the apostles feared, trembling, and receded from the solidity of certain hope and firm faith. Because indeed the tail is the extreme part of the body, what does it signify but the end of the Lord's passion? Moses therefore took hold of the tail, and nothing further of the form of the serpent appeared in the rod, because the mystery of the Lord's passion and cross being completed, every faithful one then returned to the faith, and Christ, death being consumed, repaired in Himself that very thing which He had been through the glory of the resurrection.

Now indeed, what is it that the Israelite folk is commanded to place the blood of the lamb upon the doorposts of the houses (Exod. XII), except that it prefigures us carrying the cross of Christ, who is the true lamb, upon our forehead? For the lamb was immolated in the evening, and in the evening of the world Christ suffered. The posts are surely anointed, lest the destroying angel dare to bring in destruction; and we bear the banner of the cross in our heart and forehead, lest the sudden enemy rushing in should be able to take away salvation. Whence also we sing secure: "The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us (Psal. IV)." Which, however, we sing more securely and worthily if, the Red Sea now having been crossed and the enemy submerged, we carry the timbrel (*tympanum*) with Miriam [Mary], the sister of Moses (Exod. XV). What is it to carry a timbrel? Hear the Lord saying: "He that will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me (Luc. IX)." For he who crucifies his flesh with its vices and concupiscences (Galat. V), who mortifies his members which are upon the earth by abstaining (Col. III), he truly carries the timbrel with Miriam, because he keeps himself dry from the harmful humors of earthly pleasure. Therefore, according to the consequence of reason, here also the timbrel designates the mystery of the cross not obscurely.

Praeterea et illud non inconvenienter occurrit, quod videlicet Israeliticus populus in Mara adversus Moysen murmurat, vociferans scilicet non se posse reperire quod bibat. Tunc ostendit Moysi Dominus lignum, quod cum ille misisset in amarissimas aquas, in dulcedinem protinus sunt conversae (Exod. XV). Quid enim amarae illae aquae, nisi quia occidentis litterae, et durae atque insipidae legis speciem tenent? Scriptum est enim: «Constituit populo suo Dominus legem, et judicia, et tentavit eum (Ibid.).» Et alibi: «Ego dedi eis praecepta non bona, et judicia, in quibus non vivent (Ezech. XX).» Cui tamen legi si confessio crucis et Dominicae passionis mysterium copulatur, protinus quod amarum fuerat, in spiritalis intelligentiae dulcedinem vertitur. Notandum autem juxta veritatem historiae, quod aqua in dulcedinem versa, subinde populus venit in Helim, ubi erant duodecim fontes aquarum et septuaginta palmae. Quid enim duodecim fontes, nisi duodecim sunt apostoli, quos Dominus ad hoc constituit, ut arida et squalentia humani generis pectora suae praedicationis inundationibus irrigarent? Quid vero septuaginta palmarum arbores, nisi totidem sunt discipuli, quos ante faciem suam idcirco misit (Luc. X), ut per eos victoriae suae palmas mundus agnosceret? Et certe satis congrue videtur consequentium rerum ordo dispositus, ut primo populus duceretur ad litteram legis, a qua nimirum, dum amara fuit, transire non potuit. At postquam est per lignum vitae dulcis effecta, et intelligi spiritualiter coepit, illico Dei populus de Veteri Testamento ad apostolicos fontes et palmarum arbores, id est ad Evangelii gratiam transiit. Et bene post acceptum Decalogum septuplus praedicatorum numerus constituitur, quia per septiformem sancti Spiritus gratiam omne mandatum divinae legis impletur. Nec immerito plane praedicatores crucis palmarum videntur nomine figurati, dum et ipsa crux jure dicenda sit palma, quia in ea scilicet facta est de prostrato mundi hoste victoria; sicut de ipsa cruce sponsus ad sponsam, «Dixi, inquit, ascendam in palmam, apprehendam fructus ejus; et erunt ubera tua sicut botri vineae, et odores tui sicut malorum, guttur tuum sicut vinum optimum (Cant. VII).» Fructus nempe crucis omnes electi sunt.

Ascendit igitur Dominus in palmam, et apprehendit fructus ejus, quia mox ut in cruce pro nostra salute pependit, omnes electos ad semetipsum per amoris desiderium traxit. Et tunc sancta Ecclesia per duorum Testamentorum ubera spiritalis coepit laetitiae vina diffundere, atque odorem coelestis concupiscentiae humanarum mentium naribus inspirare, ut incitata ad obsequendum mens nostra sibi gratulans, dicat: «Trahe me post te, curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum (Cant. I).»

Furthermore, that also occurs not inconveniently, that namely the Israelite people in Marah murmurs against Moses, crying out namely that they cannot find what they may drink. Then the Lord showed Moses a piece of wood, which when he had cast into the most bitter waters, they were straightway turned into sweetness (Exod. XV). For what are those bitter waters, except that they hold the appearance of the killing letter, and of the hard and tasteless law? For it is written: "The Lord appointed to his people a law, and judgments, and tempted them (Ibid.)." And elsewhere: "I gave them precepts that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live (Ezech. XX)." To which law, however, if the confession of the cross and the mystery of the Lord's passion is coupled, straightway that which had been bitter is turned into the sweetness of spiritual understanding. It is to be noted, however, according to the truth of history, that the water having been turned into sweetness, immediately the people came to Elim, where there were twelve fountains of waters and seventy palms. For what are the twelve fountains, but the twelve apostles, whom the Lord appointed for this, that they should irrigate the dry and squalid breasts of the human race with the inundations of their preaching? What indeed are the seventy palm trees, but as many disciples, whom He therefore sent before His face (Luc. X), that through them the world might recognize the palms of His victory? And certainly the order of subsequent things seems disposed congruously enough, that first the people should be led to the letter of the law, from which surely, while it was bitter, it could not pass. But after it was made sweet through the tree of life, and began to be understood spiritually, straightway the people of God passed from the Old Testament to the apostolic fountains and palm trees, that is, to the grace of the Gospel. And well after the Decalogue had been received, a sevenfold number of preachers is appointed, because through the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit every commandment of the divine law is fulfilled. Nor clearly are the preachers of the cross undeservedly seen to be figured by the name of palms, while the cross itself may rightly be called a palm, because in it namely victory was made over the prostrate enemy of the world; as concerning the cross itself the bridegroom says to the bride, "I said," he says, "I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its fruits; and thy breasts shall be as the clusters of the vine, and the odors of thy mouth as of apples, thy throat as the best wine (Cant. VII)." Surely all the elect are the fruits of the cross.

The Lord therefore went up into the palm tree, and took hold of its fruits, because as soon as He hung on the cross for our salvation, He drew all the elect to Himself through the desire of love. And then the holy Church through the breasts of the two Testaments began to diffuse the wines of spiritual joy, and to inspire the odor of heavenly concupiscence into the nostrils of human minds, so that our mind, incited to obey and congratulating itself, should say: "Draw me after thee, we will run in the odor of thy ointments (Cant. I)."

Quod profecto et petra illa Oreb in Raphidim satis expresse denuntiat, quam virga Moyses, Domino jubente, percussit, et aquas elicuit (Exod. XVII). Hanc sane petram Christi tenuisse figuram et Apostolus testatur, cum dicit: «Bibebant autem de spiritali, consequente eos petra; petra autem erat Christus (I Cor. X).» Huic itaque petrae lignum crucis accessit, et mox tanquam aquae profluentis inundantiam larga sancti Spiritus dona profudit. Ad quas nimirum hauriendas aquas omnes sitientes invitat ipse, cum dicit: «Si quis sitit, veniat ad me, et bibat, et de ventre ejus fluent aquae vivae (Joan. VII).» Hoc autem, inquit evangelista, «dicebat de Spiritu, quem accepturi erant credentes in eum (Ibid.).»

Sed quid in reliquis diutius immoramur, dum constet esse perspicuum quod et ipsae tabulae, quae Dei digito scriptae sunt, crucis Dominicae praetulerint sacramentum? Decem namque praecepta in eis scripta sunt, et denarius numerus per X litteram, quae crucis exprimit speciem, designatur. In hac sane littera, quae denarium in se continet numerum, sic unus apex a summo in imum per obliquum ducitur, ut alter quoque non dispar per transversam lineam, productis utrinque brachiis, compingatur. Et sic apicis utriusque facta complexio non solum exteriorem crucis praetendit imaginem, sed et mysticam ejus quamdam videtur indicare virtutem. Dicit enim Dominus: «Non veni solvere legem, sed adimplere (Matth. V).» Per crucis itaque sacramentum praecepta veteris instrumenti evangelicae gratiae copulavit, et, ut ita loquar, duo Testamenta velut unius doctrinae corpus effecit. Et quidem primo datae sunt tabulae, sed protinus sunt, populo praevaricante, effractae (Exod. XXXII); secundo vero dantur tabulae, sed perpetuo permansurae. Plane priores tabulae priscae legis tenuere figuram, quae a sui cultus obsequio erat postmodum desitura [defectura]. Postmodum vero dantur tabulae, sed non franguntur; quia Novi Testamenti gratia, quae per crucis est solidata mysterium, nullum novit habere defectum.

Porro autem nec arca illa Veteris Testamenti beatae crucis credenda est caruisse thesauris. Crucis namque incomparabiles divitias occultabat, quia et cruci jam per cuncta figurarum suarum atque aenigmatum mysteria militabat. Ejus quippe ex tunc jam erat ministra, imago scilicet veritatis, et initium plenitudinis. Arca scilicet, sancta erat Ecclesia. Tria vero continebantur in arca, duae videlicet lapideae tabulae, quae profecto duorum Testamentorum innuunt perpetuam firmitatem, quas etiam crucis in se mysterium continere supra docuimus. Urna quoque aurea habens manna.

Which indeed that rock of Horeb in Rephidim also denounces quite expressly, which Moses, at the Lord's command, struck with a rod, and drew out waters (Exod. XVII). That this rock held the figure of Christ the Apostle also testifies when he says: "But they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them; and the rock was Christ (I Cor. X)." To this rock therefore the wood of the cross was added, and soon it poured out the large gifts of the Holy Spirit like an inundation of flowing water. To which waters indeed to be drawn He Himself invites all who thirst, when He says: "If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink, and out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water (Joan. VII)." But this, the evangelist says, "he spoke of the Spirit, whom those that believed in him were to receive (Ibid.)."

But why do we delay longer in the rest, since it is established as clear that even the tablets themselves, which were written by the finger of God, displayed the sacrament of the Lord's cross? For ten precepts were written on them, and the number ten is designated by the letter X, which expresses the appearance of the cross. In this letter, which contains the number ten in itself, one stroke is drawn from top to bottom obliquely, so that another also not unlike it is joined through a transverse line, with arms produced on both sides. And thus the junction made of both strokes not only holds out the exterior image of the cross, but also seems to indicate a certain mystical power of it. For the Lord says: "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill (Matth. V)." Therefore through the sacrament of the cross He coupled the precepts of the Old Testament to Gospel grace, and, so to speak, He made the two Testaments as it were the body of one doctrine. And indeed at first the tablets were given, but immediately, the people prevaricating, they were broken (Exod. XXXII); but secondly the tablets are given, but to remain perpetually. Plainly the first tablets held the figure of the ancient law, which was afterwards to cease [fail] from the obedience of its worship. But afterwards the tablets are given, but they are not broken; because the grace of the New Testament, which was solidified through the mystery of the cross, knows no failure.

Furthermore, neither is that ark of the Old Testament to be believed to have lacked the treasures of the blessed cross. For it hid the incomparable riches of the cross, because it already served the cross through all the mysteries of its figures and enigmas. For of it even then it was already the minister, namely the image of truth, and the beginning of fullness. The ark, namely, was the holy Church. But three things were contained in the ark, namely two stone tablets, which surely intimate the perpetual firmness of the two Testaments, which also we taught above to contain the mystery of the cross in themselves. Also a golden urn having manna.

Haec profecto puram atque sinceram carnem Redemptoris exprimit, quae procul dubio dulcedinem perpetuae divinitatis includit. Quae dulcedo tunc in palato nostrarum mentium sapuit, ex quo miles pendentis in cruce Domini latus aperuit (Joan. XIX); cum botrus videlicet expressus est, qui dum calcaretur, torcular calcavit solus. Tertio in arca fuit virga Aaron, quae post ariditatem floruit (Num. XVII). Quae nimirum quid aliud significat, nisi summi verique pontificis nostri illud salutare vexillum immortalis memoriae semper viriditate floridum, et exuberantium fructuum fertilitate fecundum. Crux enim semper viret in spe, floret in fide, fructificat in charitate. Et postquam a terreno cespite praecisa est, frondet, quia quisquis per amorem crucis a terrenis se desideriis in ipsa mentis radice [mentis radicem] praescidit, ad haereditatem immarcescibilem capessendam, et semper virentia aeternae vitae pascua convalescit.

Verum quid amplius de laude beatae crucis edisseram, quandoquidem omnia illa sacrificia quae sub legalium caeremoniarum ritu offerri jubentur, ad hoc unum singulare verumque sacrificium quod in arca crucis oblatum est referantur? Per vitulum namque, qui de armento offerri praecipitur (Exod. XXIX), Redemptor noster, qui de patriarcharum descendit progenie, figuratur. Hic nimirum aratro crucis suae terram carnis nostrae perdomuit, et ex Spiritus sancti semine virtutum nos fruge ditavit. Hic vitulus sine macula non in tabernaculo, sed ante ostium ejus a filiis Aaron offerebatur (Exod. XXIX); quia et Dominus, qui sine peccato est (Isai. LIII), sub Anna et Caipha (Luc. III) extra portam est crucifixus. Ipse Agnus qui mundi peccata detersit (Joan. I). Ipse haedus, qui auctorem peccati diabolum, crucis gladio jugulavit. Ipse columba, in cujus nimirum specie Spiritus sanctus super eum ad Jordanis fluenta descendit (Matth. III). Ipse etiam turtur, quia perpetuae castitatis auctor existit, sicut sibi a sponsa dicitur: «Speciosae genae tuae sicut turturis (Cant. I).»

Eamdem porro vivificae crucis hostiam designabat et vitula illa rufa, quae, aetate quidem integra, sed jugi esse jubetur ignara (Num. XIX). Rufa nimirum vitula caro est Salvatoris, rosea scilicet sanguine passionis. Perfectae quidem aetatis Dominus ad passionem venit, sed ejus collum jugum peccati cujuslibet non attrivit. Qui vitulam offerunt immundi sunt, et qui Christum crucifigunt, unde mundus abluitur, ipsi damnabiliter inquinantur. Qui vero cinerem colligens, extra castra projicit, mundus est; quia quicunque crucis Dominicae passionisque mysterium per mundi latitudinem praedicant, a peccatorum se contagio per aedificationis fraternae ministerium purgant.

This surely expresses the pure and sincere flesh of the Redeemer, which without doubt includes the sweetness of perpetual divinity. Which sweetness then tasted in the palate of our minds, from when the soldier opened the side of the Lord hanging on the cross (Joan. XIX); when namely the cluster (*botrus*) was pressed, who while he was trodden, alone trod the winepress. Third in the ark was the rod of Aaron, which after aridity flourished (Num. XVII). Which surely signifies what else but that saving banner of our supreme and true high priest, always flowering with the greenness of immortal memory, and fecund with the fertility of exuberant fruits. For the cross always grows green in hope, flowers in faith, fructifies in charity. And after it was cut off from the earthly sod, it puts forth leaves, because whoever through love of the cross cuts himself off from earthly desires in the very root of the mind, grows strong to seize the unfading inheritance and the ever-green pastures of eternal life.

But what more shall I discourse concerning the praise of the blessed cross, since all those sacrifices which are commanded to be offered under the rite of legal ceremonies are referred to this one singular and true sacrifice which was offered on the altar of the cross? For by the calf (*vitulus*), which is commanded to be offered from the herd (Exod. XXIX), our Redeemer, who descended from the progeny of the patriarchs, is figured. He surely with the plow of His cross tamed the earth of our flesh, and enriched us with the fruit of virtues from the seed of the Holy Spirit. This calf without spot was offered not in the tabernacle, but before its door by the sons of Aaron (Exod. XXIX); because the Lord also, who is without sin (Isai. LIII), was crucified under Annas and Caiaphas (Luc. III) outside the gate. He is the Lamb who wiped away the sins of the world (Joan. I). He is the kid, who slew the author of sin, the devil, with the sword of the cross. He is the dove, in whose species surely the Holy Spirit descended upon Him at the waters of the Jordan (Matth. III). He is also the turtle-dove, because He exists as the author of perpetual chastity, as is said to Him by the bride: "Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle-dove's (Cant. I)."

Furthermore, that same victim of the life-giving cross was designated by that red heifer, which is commanded to be of perfect age, but ignorant of the yoke (Num. XIX). Surely the red heifer is the flesh of the Savior, namely rosy with the blood of the Passion. Indeed, the Lord came to the Passion of perfect age, but the yoke of any sin whatever did not wear His neck. Those who offer the heifer are unclean, and those who crucify Christ, from whom the world is washed, are themselves damnably defiled. But he who, collecting the ash, casts it outside the camp, is clean; because whoever preach the mystery of the Lord's cross and passion throughout the breadth of the world, purge themselves from the contagion of sins through the ministry of fraternal edification.

Sed quibusdam fortasse displiceat quod nos ad laudem crucis tot sacri eloquii exempla congerimus, et velut instructam instrumenti veteris aciem huic regio vexillo prorsus intentam parere monstramus. Quibus certe quid aliud dicendum est, nisi quod Apostolus perhibet, dicens: «Verbum crucis pereuntibus quidem stultitia est; his autem qui salvi fiunt, id est nobis, virtus Dei est (I Cor. I).» Quidquid enim de crucis laude disserimus, in ejus non ambigitur redundare praeconium qui crucis illustravit propria morte vexillum.

Per haec itaque, fratres mei, quae dicta sunt, liquido colligere possumus quia hoc coelestis victoriae signum, per quod mundus erat de captivitatis antiquae vinculis absolvendus, ab ipso mundi principio Patres adorant, Prophetae praenuntiant, omnesque sacrarum [sanctarum] Scripturarum paginae praefigurant. Quippe quod nos adoramus in munere, illi jam venerabantur in fide. Et quod apud illos erat quibusdam aenigmatibus figuratum, nos per Mediatoris gratiam jam videmus impletum, ut quod illi praesagiebantur per spiritum, nos jam per corporalem cernamus et amplectamur obtutum. O admiranda Conditoris nostri pia clementia! o praedicanda singularis nostri Redemptoris humilitas! Atrocissimae mortis subire dignatus est poenam, ut nos proveheret ad coronam. Turpissimum crucis elegit propria voluntate supplicium, ut nos de servitutis jugo sublimaret ad regnum. Maledici non respuit, ut nos de maledicto legis absolveret. Probrosam mortem pertulit, ut nos ab aeternae mortis opprobrio liberaret. Unde et Apostolus: «Christus, inquit, nos redemit de maledicto legis, factus pro nobis maledictum, quia scriptum est: Maledictus omnis, qui pendet in ligno; ut in gentibus benedictio Abrahae fieret in Christo Jesu, ut pollicitationem spiritus accipiamus per fidem (Gal. III).»

Quia ergo, fratres mei, servitutis jugo soluti, benedictionem Abrahae in Christo jam sumus adepti, quid restat, nisi ut ea quae, gratia praeveniente, percepimus, etiam per vitae meritum Redemptoris nostri dona servemus, ne qui per baptismum in Christo renascimur, secundum veterem rursus hominem viventes, ad damnationis ejus sententiam revocemur? Nam et hodie in ecclesia illud David canimus: «Maledicti qui declinant a mandatis tuis (Psal. CXVIII).»

But perhaps it may displease some that we heap up so many examples of the sacred eloquence for the praise of the cross, and show as it were the instructed battle line of the Old Testament to obey, utterly intent upon this royal banner. To whom certainly what else must be said, except that which the Apostle holds out, saying: "The word of the cross, to them indeed that perish, is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is, to us, it is the power of God (I Cor. I)." For whatever we discourse concerning the praise of the cross, it is not doubted to redound to the praise of Him who illustrated the banner of the cross by His own death.

Through these things therefore, my brothers, which have been said, we can clearly gather that this sign of heavenly victory, through which the world was to be absolved from the bonds of ancient captivity, the Fathers adore from the very beginning of the world, the Prophets foretell, and all the pages of the holy Scriptures prefigure. Surely what we adore in the gift, they already venerated in faith. And what among them was figured by certain enigmas, we already see fulfilled through the grace of the Mediator, so that what they presaged through the spirit, we already discern and embrace through corporal gaze. O admirable pious clemency of our Founder! O to be preached singular humility of our Redeemer! He deigned to undergo the penalty of the most atrocious death, that He might promote us to the crown. He chose the most shameful punishment of the cross by His own will, that He might sublime us from the yoke of servitude to the kingdom. He did not refuse to be cursed, that He might absolve us from the curse of the law. He bore a shameful death, that He might deliver us from the reproach of eternal death. Whence also the Apostle: "Christ," he says, "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, that we may receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal. III)."

Because therefore, my brothers, having been loosed from the yoke of servitude, we have now obtained the blessing of Abraham in Christ, what remains but that we preserve those gifts of our Redeemer which we perceived by prevenient grace, also through the merit of life, lest we who are born again in Christ through baptism, living again according to the old man, should be recalled to the sentence of his damnation? For today also in the church we sing that word of David: "Cursed are they that decline from thy commandments (Psal. CXVIII)."

Consideranda nempe sententia, quia non dicitur, maledicti qui non non renascuntur in sacramentis tuis, sed, qui declinant a mandatis tuis, quia videlicet non solum illi maledictionis nexibus sunt obnoxii, quos in Christo aqua baptismatis non regenerat, sed illi etiam quorum pravitas a rectitudine mandatorum Dei per vitiorum abrupta declinat. Quid ergo prodest quia de vinculis quis vetustae maledictionis absolvitur, si per vitam reprobam eisdem vinculis denuo retrudatur? Nam et Apostolus ait: «Qui non amat Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, sit anathema, maranatha (I Cor. XVI). Ubi aeque notandum quia non dicit: Qui non renascitur in Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum sed qui non amat, ut etiam si baptismo probetur quis in Christo renatus, si non sit etiam ex conversatione commortuus, nequaquam sit a maledictionis omnino vinculis absolutus: «Si enim, juxta Apostolum, complantati sumus similitudini mortis ejus, simul et resurrectionis erimus (Rom. VI).» Et rursus: «Si compatimur, et conregnabimus; si commorimur, et convivemus (II Tim. II).» Sed quis ille est qui non amat Christum? Quis enim nostrum, si de Christi dilectione consulitur, non protinus constanter, imo promptissime se Christum diligere fateatur? Verum ille non amat Christum qui non amat crucem Christi. Et qui sunt qui Christi crucem non amant? Audi Paulum manifesta eos voce notantem: «Multi, inquit, ambulant, quos saepe dicebam vobis (nunc autem et flens dico) inimicos crucis Christi, quorum finis interitus, quorum Deus venter est: et gloria in confusione eorum, qui terrena sapiunt (Philip. III).» Loquatur et Jacobus: «Qui amicus, ait, est hujus saeculi, inimicus Dei constituitur (Jac. IV).»

Quisquis ergo desiderat ab omni vinculo maledictionis absolvi, et plenam novae gratiae benedictionem consequi, crucem diligat, ex qua videlicet omnis plenitudo benedictionis emanat. Per crucem se Dei mandatis astringat. Per crucem effrenis carnis incentiva cohibeat. Sicut enim consentiendo carni, sententiam maledictionis incurrimus, sic refrenando carnem, benedictionis gratiam promeretur. Ex torculari namque [nempe] crucis largissima benedictionis unda profluxit, quae maledictionis antiquae virus omne detersit.

Surely the sentence is to be considered, because it is not said, "cursed are they who are not born again in thy sacraments," but, "who decline from thy commandments," because namely not only are those obnoxious to the bonds of the curse whom the water of baptism does not regenerate in Christ, but those also whose depravity declines from the rectitude of the commandments of God through the precipices of vices. What therefore does it profit that anyone is absolved from the bonds of the ancient curse, if through a reprobate life he is thrust back again into the same bonds? For the Apostle also says: "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha (I Cor. XVI)." Where it is equally to be noted that he does not say: "Who is not born again in our Lord Jesus Christ," but "who loveth not," so that even if anyone is proved by baptism to be born again in Christ, if he be not also died together with Him by conduct, he is by no means entirely absolved from the bonds of the curse: "For if," according to the Apostle, "we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection (Rom. VI)." And again: "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him (II Tim. II)." But who is he who does not love Christ? For who of us, if consulted concerning the love of Christ, would not immediately, constantly, rather most promptly confess that he loves Christ? But he does not love Christ who does not love the cross of Christ. And who are those who do not love the cross of Christ? Hear Paul noting them with a manifest voice: "For many," he says, "walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you even weeping) that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly: and whose glory is in their shame, who savor earthly things (Philip. III)." Let James also speak: "Whosoever," he says, "will be a friend of this world, is become an enemy of God (Jac. IV)."

Whoever therefore desires to be absolved from every bond of the curse, and to obtain the full blessing of new grace, let him love the cross, from which namely all fullness of blessing emanates. Through the cross let him bind himself to the commandments of God. Through the cross let him restrain the incentives of unbridled flesh. For just as by consenting to the flesh, we incur the sentence of the curse, so by refraining the flesh, the grace of blessing is merited. For from the winepress (*torculari*) of the cross the most large wave of blessing flowed out, which wiped away every poison of the ancient curse.

Inde nimirum stillicidia charismatum coelestium proruperunt, quae ariditatem humanarum mentium salubriter irrigant, omniumque virtutum felici fruge fecundant. Haec est enim nubes illa quae Eliae sub vestigio hominis in tempore siccitatis apparuit, et mox inundantis pluviae copia abundanter [subsequenter] erupit. Sic enim Scriptura commemorat: «Ecce, inquit, nubecula parva quasi vestigium hominis ascendebat de mari (III Reg. XVIII).» Quia enim non quasi homo, sed quasi vestigium hominis ascendisse dicitur, recte per hoc crux, quae membris est aptata Dominicis designatur. Et bene crux vestigium hominis dicitur, quia per eam Deus homo transitum fecit, cum ad Patrem rediit, sicut per Joannem dicitur: «Sciens Jesus quia venit ejus hora, ut transeat ex hoc mundo ad Patrem (Joan. XIII).» Pascha quippe transitus dicitur. Et hic transitus per crucem factus est, sicut dicit Apostolus - «Pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus (I Cor. V).» Sicut ergo per Virginem descendit ad nostra, sic per crucem est reversus ad propria. Quod congruenter expressit illud factum sub Eliseo miraculum. Nam cum juxta Jordanem ligna caederentur, repente securis cujusdam materiam succidentis in aquam cecidit. Tune propheta lignum in aquam misit, et mox ferrum natavit, atque ad manubrium rediit (IV Reg. VI). Quid est autem securis, nisi sapientia Dei operata per corpus? Quid ferrum, nisi divinitas? Quid lignum, nisi humanitas? Et recte corpus Christi lignum dicitur, quia a ligno pependit. Securis igitur juxta Jordanem arbores succidebat, quia Dei sapientia, juxta fluidum mortalitatis nostrae decursum, dignata est impios Judaeos suae praedicationis austeritate corripere, et velut infructuosas arbores a statu rigidae superbiae desecare. Unde et Joannes dicit: «Jam securis ad radicem arborum posita est. Omnis arbor quae non facit fructum bonum, excidetur, et in ignem mittetur (Matth. III; Luc. III).» Itaque dum ligna caeduntur, ferrum in aquam de manubrio cecidit, quia dum silvestres Judaeorum mentes Veritas corripit, divinitas carnem deserens ad inferni profunda descendit. Sed lignum in aquam mittitur, et ferrum redit, quia corpus Domini, quod in ligno pependerat, in sepulcro ponitur, deinde ex profundis inferi, spiritu redeunte, surrexit.

Unde notandum est, fratres mei, et diligentissime perpendendum quia ipse Redemptor noster ante per crucem transiit, et sic humanitatem suam in paternae dexterae gloriam sublimavit. Exemplum quippe nobis exhihuit, ut unde caput praecessisse cognoscitur, per eamdem viam et membra subsequentia gradiantur. Praeferimus igitur crucem in fronte, sed eamdem crucem multo salubrius recondamus in corde. In utroque poste sanguinem percussor angelus videat (Exod. XII), ut exclusus evadat, non perempturus irrumpat.

From there surely the drippings of heavenly charisms burst forth, which healthfully irrigate the aridity of human minds, and fecundate them with the happy fruit of all virtues. For this is that cloud which appeared to Elijah under the footstep of a man in the time of drought, and soon the abundance of inundating rain burst forth subsequently. For thus the Scripture records: "Behold," it says, "a little cloud small as a man's footstep ascended from the sea (III Reg. XVIII)." For because it is said to have ascended not as a man, but as the footstep of a man, by this the cross, which was adapted to the Lord's members, is rightly designated. And well the cross is called the footstep of a man, because through it the God-man made His transition, when He returned to the Father, as it is said through John: "Jesus knowing that his hour was come, that he should pass out of this world to the Father (Joan. XIII)." Indeed, Pascha is called transition [transitus]. And this transition was made through the cross, as the Apostle says: "Christ our Pascha is sacrificed (I Cor. V)." As therefore He descended to our things through the Virgin, so He returned to His own through the cross. Which that miracle performed under Elisha congruously expressed. For when wood was being cut near the Jordan, suddenly the iron of a certain one cutting the matter fell into the water. Then the prophet cast a piece of wood into the water, and soon the iron swam, and returned to the handle (IV Reg. VI). What, however, is the axe, except the wisdom of God operating through the body? What is the iron, except the divinity? What the wood, except the humanity? And rightly the body of Christ is called wood, because it hung from the wood. The axe therefore was cutting the trees near the Jordan, because the wisdom of God, near the fluid course of our mortality, deigned to correct the impious Jews with the austerity of His preaching, and to cut down as it were unfruitful trees from the state of rigid pride. Whence also John says: "Now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire (Matth. III; Luc. III)." Therefore while the wood is being cut, the iron fell from the handle into the water, because while Truth corrects the sylvan minds of the Jews, the divinity deserting the flesh descended to the depths of hell. But the wood is cast into the water, and the iron returns, because the body of the Lord, which had hung on the wood, is placed in the sepulcher, then from the depths of hell, the spirit returning, it rose.

Whence it is to be noted, my brothers, and most diligently weighed, that our Redeemer Himself first passed through the cross, and thus sublimated His humanity into the glory of the Father's right hand. He exhibited an example to us indeed, so that from where the head is known to have preceded, through the same way also the subsequent members should walk. We prefer therefore the cross on our forehead, but let us hide the same cross much more healthfully in our heart. Let the destroying angel see the blood on both posts (Exod. XII), that excluded he may evade, not to perish he may rush in.

Nec sibi quispiam de solo signo crucis applaudat, si veritatem crucis in operibus non exhibeat. Crucem nempe illi in suis moribus signanter expresserat, qui dicebat: «Ego enim stigmata Jesu in corpore meo porto (Gal. VI).»

Mundantes igitur nosmetipsos, charissimi, ab omni inquinamento carnis et spiritus, accingamur adversantium vitiorum impetus frangere, carnalis illecebrae passionibus obviare, pie proximorum necessitatibus condescendere, illatas etiam contumelias, servata charitate, perferre. Sit mens nostra ab omni terrenae cupiditatis pondere libera, ut sancti desiderii librata pennis ima jam deserat, atque ad Auctorem suum rediens in ejus amore suaviter requiescat. Fasditio nobis sint cuncta quae cernimus. Ad illa vero quae credimus, continui laboris instantia festinemus. Haec profecto crux est, quam moribus et actibus nostris debemus imprimere. Haec est, quam jubemur quotidie post Dominum bajulare. Qui hanc portat, passioni Redemptoris sui vere communicat. Hoc signum oves ab haedis in extremo examine segregat (Matth. XXV). Et judex, qui reprobos nescit, hunc in suis characterem recognoscit. Quibus autem impressum propriae mortis stigma considerat; mox ad aeternae vitae praemia gratus remunerator invitat: «Venite, inquiens, benedicti Patris mei, percipite regnum (Ibid.);» cum quo ipse vivit et regnat per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XIX.

DE SANCTO ANTHIMO MARTYRE. (XI MAII.)

Cum beati Anthimi, fratres charissimi, triumphalia gesta recolimus, triumphantis in eo Christi victorias celebramus. Ille siquidem in eo pugnabat, ille superabat, qui et fidei constantiam praebebat animo, ne suppliciis cederet, et verba vitae labiis suggerebat, ut infideles et perditos ab errore veteris perfidiae revocaret. «Non enim, inquit, vos estis qui loquimini, sed spiritus Patris vestri, qui loquitur in vobis (Matth. X).» Stringebatur corpus loris nexuum, sed verbum Dei non erat alligatum (II Tim. II). Horrebat tenebris carcer angustus, sed mens atria supernae claritatis inhabitans, beato lumine fruebatur: dicens cum Paulo: «Qui nos resuscitavit, et consedere fecit secum in coelestibus (Ephes. II).» Livebant membra plagis verberum, sed aiebat: «Licet is, qui foris est, noster homo corrumpatur; sed is, qui intus est, renovatur de die in diem (II Cor. IV).»

Nor let anyone applaud himself concerning the sign of the cross alone, if he does not exhibit the truth of the cross in his works. For he had significantly expressed the cross in his own morals, who said: "For I bear the marks [stigmata] of Jesus in my body (Gal. VI)."

Cleansing ourselves therefore, most dear ones, from all defilement of flesh and spirit, let us be girded to break the impetus of opposing vices, to meet the passions of carnal allurement, piously to condescend to the necessities of our neighbors, and to bear even the contumelies inflicted upon us, charity having been preserved. Let our mind be free from every weight of earthly cupidity, so that balanced on the wings of holy desire it may now desert the lowest things, and returning to its Author it may rest sweetly in His love. Let all things which we discern be a weariness to us. Toward those things indeed which we believe, let us hasten with the instance of continual labor. This surely is the cross which we ought to imprint on our morals and acts. This is what we are commanded to carry daily after the Lord. He who carries this truly communicates in the passion of his Redeemer. This sign separates the sheep from the goats in the final examination (Matth. XXV). And the Judge, who knows not the reprobate, recognizes this character in His own. To whom, however, He considers the stigma of His own death imprinted, He soon, as a grateful rewarder, invites to the rewards of eternal life: "Come," saying, "ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom (Ibid.);" with whom He Himself lives and reigns through all ages of ages. Amen.

Sermon XIX.

ON SAINT ANTHIMUS THE MARTYR. (MAY 11.)

When we recall the triumphal deeds of the blessed Anthimus, most dear brothers, we celebrate the victories of Christ triumphing in him. For He was fighting in him, He was overcoming, who both provided constancy of faith to his mind, lest he should yield to punishments, and suggested words of life to his lips, that he might recall the unfaithful and lost from the error of their ancient perfidy. "For it is not you," He says, "that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you (Matth. X)." The body was bound by the thongs of bonds, but the word of God was not bound (II Tim. II). The narrow prison was horrible with darkness, but the mind, inhabiting the courts of supernal clarity, enjoyed the blessed light: saying with Paul: "Who hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places (Ephes. II)." The members were livid with the blows of stripes, but he said: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day (II Cor. IV)."

Cum talibus armatis noster Jesus ascendit in praelium, defuncto Moyse et Jordane transmisso, cessante scilicet veteris legis observantia et percepto baptismatis sacramento. «Lex enim et prophetae usque ad Joannem (Luc. XVI);» ut videlicet illic legi Veteris Testamenti finis occurreret, unde novae gratiae lavacrum profluendi ad salutem hominum originem inveniret. Jesus itaque ille Israelitica plebs dux, nostrum verum Jesum humani generis Salvatorem et vocabulo praefiguravit et facto. Mittitur ille ad perdendas gentium nationes; venit hic ad debellandas aereas potestates. Mittit ille Jericho duos exploratores (Jos. II), dirigit iste in hunc mundum sub ejusdem numeri sacramento suos praedicatores. «Misit, enim, testante Evangelista, binos ante faciem suam in omnem civitatem et locum quo erat ipse venturus (Luc. X).» Mittebantur illi, ut locorum situs sollicita curiositate perquirerent; missi sunt isti, ut venienti Jesu viam fidei in humanis cordibus praepararent. Illi in Rahab meretricis hospitio suscipiuntur (Jos. II); isti apud Ecclesiam gentium, quae cum idolis fornicata fuerat, requiescunt. Porro Rahab coccineum funiculum, sanguinei videlicet coloris, in fenestra propriae domus appendit; et sancta Ecclesia in fenestra suae domus quodammodo ruborem sanguinis ponit, dum et passionem Christi publice confitetur in voce, et signum crucis palam portat in fronte. Unde bene sponsus ad sponsam dicit in Canticis: «Sicut vitta coccinea labia tua, et eloquium tuum dulce (Cant. IV).» Quid enim labia sponsae, nisi doctores intelliguntur Ecclesiae. Coccus autem sanguinis habet ruborem, vel ignis speciem, quod significat charitatem. Labia ergo Ecclesiae, hoc est, praedicatores sancti, coccineae vittae sunt similes, quia mortem Christi praedicant, eumque pro charitate generis humani crucis subiisse patibulum constanter affirmant. Et bene per vittam coccineam praedicatorum ordo signatur. Vitta siquidem capillos ligat, in unumque constringit, et sancti doctores in unitatem fidei praedicatione sua fidelium colligunt multitudinem atque in unum redigunt sub mutuae charitatis compage decorem. Postremo quisquis extra domum illam inventus est, gladios non vitavit; quicunque etiam ab Ecclesiae limite, qui fides est, exterior fuerit, periculum procul dubio mortis incurrit.

Extra hanc domum sacrilegus ille Ceremon repertus est, qui acceptis ab imperiali tyrannide codicillis, dum contra Christianos vesana rabie fureret, eorumque necem cruentis dentibus esuriret, a daemonio repente correptus de vehiculo corruit, diuque vexatus, dum sanctos invocaret, quos ipse crudeliter laniaverat, exspiravit. Ad hanc domum Pinianus confugium fecit, qui mox ut per B. Anthimum verbum salutis audivit, credens in Christum, omnem molestiam desperati languoris quem patiebatur, evasit.

With such armed ones our Jesus ascended into battle, Moses being dead and the Jordan crossed, namely the observance of the ancient law ceasing and the sacrament of baptism having been perceived. "For the law and the prophets were until John (Luc. XVI);" so that namely there the end of the law of the Old Testament should occur, from where the laver of new grace should find its origin of flowing forth for the salvation of men. That Jesus therefore, the leader of the Israelite folk, prefigured our true Jesus, the Savior of the human race, both in name and in deed. The former is sent to destroy the nations of the Gentiles; the latter came to war against the aerial powers. The former sends two spies into Jericho (Jos. II), the latter directs his preachers into this world under the sacrament of the same number. "For he sent," the Evangelist testifying, "them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself was to come (Luc. X)." Those were sent that they might seek out the sites of places with solicitous curiosity; these were sent that they might prepare the way of faith in human hearts for the coming Jesus. Those are received in the hospitality of Rahab the harlot (Jos. II); these rest at the Church of the Gentiles, which had fornicated with idols. Furthermore, Rahab hung a scarlet cord, namely of blood color, in the window of her own house; and the holy Church places the redness of blood as it were in the window of her house, while she both publicly confesses the passion of Christ in her voice, and openly carries the sign of the cross on her forehead. Whence well the bridegroom says to the bride in the Canticles: "Thy lips are as a scarlet lace, and thy speech is sweet (Cant. IV)." For what are understood as the lips of the bride, except the doctors of the Church. But scarlet has the redness of blood, or the appearance of fire, which signifies charity. Therefore the lips of the Church, that is, the holy preachers, are similar to a scarlet lace, because they preach the death of Christ, and they constantly affirm that He underwent the gibbet of the cross for the charity of the human race. And well is the order of preachers signed by the scarlet lace. For a lace binds the hair, and constrains it into one, and the holy doctors gather the multitude of the faithful into the unity of faith by their preaching and reduce them into one beauty under the bond of mutual charity. Finally, whoever was found outside that house did not avoid the swords; whoever also shall be exterior to the limit of the Church, which is faith, without doubt incurs the danger of death.

Outside this house that sacrilegious Ceremon was found, who having received codicils from the imperial tyranny, while he raged against the Christians with insane fury, and hungered for their death with bloody teeth, was suddenly seized by a demon and fell from his vehicle, and having been vexed for a long time, while he invoked the saints whom he himself had cruelly mangled, he expired. To this house Pinianus made his refuge, who as soon as he heard the word of salvation through the blessed Anthimus, believing in Christ, escaped all the molestation of the desperate illness from which he suffered.

Et bene factus transfuga, dum victoris Jesu castris applicuit, peregrinus in domesticum transiit, in Israeliticam haereditatem alienigena subintravit. In ore [opere] quippe beati martyris Anthimi, tanquam ex fenestra domus coccineus quodammodo funiculus dependebat, quia trophaeum crucis Christi omnibus innotescere [notum facere] non cessabat. Nec mirum videatur quia B. Anthimum et superius cum duce Jesu armatum venisse descripsimus, et nunc domus Rahab figuram tenere perhibemus. Quia, quod perspicuum est, et praedicatores et auditores, oves simul et arietes, intra unum congregantur ovile, sicut unum noscuntur habere Pastorem.

Praeterea B. Anthimus, cujus jam per multa certamina testabatur terra victorias, ut et in alio elemento nobilis ejus palma claresceret, in Tiberini gurgitis fluenta demersus est. Et ut artifex carnificum rabies nihil omitteret [dimitteret] intentatum, saxea corda gestantes, pondus alligant saxi, minus fidentes corporeae gravitati. Sed frustra lapidea moles aggravat quem penna meritorum levat. Aliena perversitas inaniter deprimit quem altipetax [sublimia petens] sanctitatis propriae virtus extollit. Felix ille vinctus, qui, dum humano solatio destituitur, ne pusillanimis fiat, angelitus visitatur. Felix, inquam, naufragus, qui, ut de voragine pelagi ad stationem littoris reportetur, non terreni remigis officio fruitur, sed coelestis nuntii vehiculo bajulatur. Angelus enim Domini veniens, ut in ipsa passionis ejus narratur historia, et vinculorum nexum solvit, et beatum martyrem ad oratorii sui [orationis suae] cellulam revocavit.

Imitemur hunc egregium virum, dilectissimi, sancte vivendo, carnis incentiva frenando, mundi gloriam contemnendo. Beati nos martyres in operatione praecedant, ut sancti angeli nobis in tribulatione succurrant. Delicatus siquidem miles est, qui ante vult triumphare quam arma conserere, prius triturare quam rura proscindere.

Considerato nempe ordine Scripturarum rite perpenditur nostrarum series actionum. Prius enim lex, deinde judicium, postremo subsequitur historia regum. Nunc sane nos expedit indicta nobis divinae legis mandata servare, postea compellimur ante tribunal tremendi Judicis rationem de nostris operibus reddere, postremo dabitur in illa supernae claritatis gloria sine fine regnare. Teneat ergo ordinem, qui vitare vult Babylonem. Ille nimirum vitae suae ordinem vivendo confundit, qui ante vult ridere quam fleat: Cum Salomon dicat: «Tempus flendi, et tempus ridendi (Eccle. III).»

And well made a fugitive (*transfuga*), while he attached himself to the camp of the victorious Jesus, he passed from a stranger to a domestic, and as an alien he entered into the Israelite inheritance. For in the mouth [work] of the blessed martyr Anthimus, a certain scarlet cord hung as if from the window of a house, because he did not cease to make the trophy of the cross of Christ known to all. Nor let it seem a wonder that we described the blessed Anthimus above as having come armed with the leader Jesus, and now we declare him to hold the figure of Rahab's house. Because, as is clear, both preachers and listeners, sheep and rams together, are gathered within one fold, just as they are known to have one Shepherd.

Furthermore, the blessed Anthimus, whose victories the earth already testified through many contests, so that his noble palm might shine in another element, was submerged in the flowing waters of the Tiber. And so that the skilled rage of the executioners should leave nothing unattempted, carrying hearts of stone, they bind the weight of a rock, trusting less in corporal gravity. But in vain does the stony mass weigh down him whom the feather of merits lifts up. Alien perversity inanely depresses him whom the virtue of his own holiness, seeking high things (*altipetax*), extols. Happy that bound one, who, while he is destitute of human solace, lest he become faint-hearted, is visited by an angel. Happy, I say, the shipwrecked one, who, that he may be reported from the abyss of the sea to the station of the shore, does not enjoy the office of an earthly rower, but is carried by the vehicle of a heavenly messenger. For the angel of the Lord coming, as is told in the history of his passion, both loosed the bond of the chains, and recalled the blessed martyr to the cell of his oratory.

Let us imitate this excellent man, most dear ones, by living holily, by refraining the incentives of the flesh, by contemning the glory of the world. Let the blessed martyrs precede us in operation, that the holy angels may succor us in tribulation. For he is a delicate soldier who wishes to triumph before joining battle, to thresh before plowing the fields.

Considered indeed according to the order of the Scriptures, the series of our actions is rightly weighed. For first the law, then judgment, and finally the history of the kings follows. Now it truly behooves us to keep the mandates of the divine law enjoined upon us; afterwards we are compelled to give an account of our works before the tribunal of the terrible Judge; finally it will be given to reign without end in that glory of supernal brightness. Therefore, let him hold the order who wishes to avoid Babylon. He surely confuses the order of his life by living, who wishes to laugh before he weeps, since Solomon says: "A time to weep, and a time to laugh" (Eccles. 3).

Ille etiam recti ordinis lineam deserit, qui creatis rebus Creatorem omnium in amore postponit. Sicut perverso homini divina voce dicitur: «Posuisti me post corpus tuum (III Reg. XIV).» Deum quippe post corpus suum ponit qui magis studet utilitati vel voluptati carnis suae consulere, quam Dei praecepta servare. Hinc est quod Sponsa dicit in Canticis: «Introduxit me rex in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem (Cant. II).» Non ait: dedit, quam non reperit; sed ordinavit, quam inordinatam invenit. Nonnulli namque in principali cordis sui loco habent uxores, filios, praedia, vel honores; in secundo autem quodammodo Deum ponunt, dum eum minus diligunt. Ii nimirum videntur quidem habere charitatem, sed inordinatam; nec illum servant ordinem charitatis, quem Veritas ipsa disposuit, cum dicit: «Diligere Deum ex toto corde, hoc esse maximum primumque mandatum; secundum autem simile esse huic, ut diligat proximum (Matth. XXII).» Non ergo se jactet quis habere charitatem, si ordinata non est, sicut nec etiam fidem, si sine operibus ac per hoc otiosa est (Jac. II).

Legitur enim quia Salomoni fuerunt uxores quasi reginae septingentae et concubinae trecentae (III Reg. XI). Quid autem mihi cum Gynaeceo Salomonis? Sed excussa palea verborum invenitur in medulla mysterium. Quid enim per septingentas, quae uxores simul et reginae memorantur, nisi illae intelliguntur animae, quae et septiformis habent gratiae Spiritum, et super resultantium vitiorum motus quasi regalem obtinent principatum? Quid autem per trecentas easdemque concubinas, nisi illae animae figurantur, quae per solam sanctae Trinitatis fidem, thalamum quidem regis ingressae sunt, sed castae conversationis et quodammodo matronalis pudicitiae munditiam non habentes, dotales uxorum tabulas non merentur? Hae nimirum et Salomoni per carnale commercium junctae sunt; quia Salvatoris nostri veri pacifici sacramenta percipiunt, et tamen per degenerem lenocinantis vitae torporem, nec habentes uni viro pudoris affectum, ad nuptialis foederis dotalitium non assurgunt. Enimvero illae animae uxorio ac regali nomine dignae sunt, quae in solo coelestis Sponsi desiderio requiescunt, quae infoederabiliter contra malignorum spirituum tentamenta confligunt. Sicut de eodem Salomone Scriptura testatur: «Quia alienigenas quosque tributarios fecit; de filiis autem Israel non constituit rex servire quemquam, sed erant viri bellatores, et ministri ejus, et principes, et duces, et praefecti curruum et equorum (III Reg. IX).» Ubi patenter ostenditur quae inter concubinas distantia sit et reginas.

He also deserts the line of right order who postpones the Creator of all things in love to created things. Just as it is said to the perverse man by the divine voice: "Thou hast put me behind thy body" (3 Kings 14). For he puts God behind his body who studies more to consult the utility or pleasure of his flesh than to keep the precepts of God. Hence it is that the Spouse says in the Canticles: "The king brought me into the wine cellar, he ordered charity in me" (Cant. 2). He does not say: he gave, which he did not find; but he ordered, which he found inordinate. For some have in the principal place of their heart wives, children, estates, or honors; but in the second place, in a certain way, they put God, while they love Him less. These indeed seem to have charity, but inordinate; nor do they keep that order of charity which Truth itself disposed, when He says: "To love God with all thy heart, this is the maximum and first commandment; and the second is like unto this, that he love his neighbor" (Matth. 22). Therefore, let no one boast that he has charity if it is not ordered, just as neither faith, if it be without works and thereby idle (James 2).

For it is read that Solomon had wives as queens, seven hundred, and three hundred concubines (3 Kings 11). But what have I to do with Solomon's Gynaeceum? But the chaff of words being shaken out, the mystery is found in the marrow. For what is understood by the seven hundred, who are mentioned as both wives and queens, unless those souls who both have the Spirit of sevenfold grace, and over the movements of resulting vices obtain a sort of royal principality? But what is figured by the same three hundred concubines, unless those souls who, through the faith of the holy Trinity alone, have indeed entered the chamber of the king, but not having the purity of chaste conversation and a sort of matronly modesty, do not deserve the dotal tablets of wives? These indeed are joined to Solomon through carnal commerce; because they perceive the sacraments of our truly peaceful Savior, and yet through the degenerate torpor of a pandering life, not having the affection of shame for one husband, they do not rise to the dowry of the nuptial covenant. But indeed those souls are worthy of the name of wife and queen, who rest in the desire of the heavenly Spouse alone, who fight unconfederably against the temptations of the evil spirits. As the Scripture testifies of the same Solomon: "Because he made all the aliens tributary; but of the children of Israel the king did not appoint anyone to serve, but they were men of war, and his ministers, and princes, and leaders, and prefects of the chariots and horsemen" (3 Kings 9). Where it is clearly shown what the distance is between concubines and queens.

Quid differat inter eos qui servi peccati durae exactionis tributa persolvunt, et eos qui per sedata bella certaminum principatuum infulas sortiuntur. Inter hos sane principes, et coelestis militiae bellatores, B. Anthimus insignis enituit, qui et cruentis impiorum manibus in persecutione non cessit, et in pace positus, insurgentium portenta vitiorum spiritali virtutum mucrone truncavit. Carnis suae membra tormentis exposuit, interioris hominis viscera illaesa servavit. Caput non timuit ferienti gladio subdere, ut Christo capiti mereretur inseparabiliter adhaerere. Erat enim in eo fides, non quae mortua esset in semetipsa, sed quae per dilectionem operabatur. Quorumdam plane fides est vana, flaccida, praetendens quidem in superficie similitudinem, non autem habens intrinsecus veritatem.

Horum porro tenuere figuram qui olim de populo Ephraim venientes ad vada Jordanis, dum nescirent exprimere sebboleth (Judic. XII), sed jebboleth [scibbolet. sibbolet] potius tanquam peregrina lingua proferrent, Galaaditarum gladiis caesi sunt. Quid enim per Jordanem, in quo Salvator noster baptizari dignatus est, nisi baptismus? Quid vero per sebboleth, quae interpretatur spica, nisi fides est intelligenda? Sicut enim spica victum praebet hominibus, ita et de fide dicitur; «quia justus ex fide vivit (Hab. II; Rom. I).» Et sicut spica multa in suis aristis grana recondit, ita et symbolum nostrae confessionis plurima in se fidei semina colligit. Venientes itaque ad Jordanem Ephrataei consuluntur a Galaaditis quomodo spicam exprimant; venientes etiam ad baptismi lavacrum catechumeni inquiruntur a sacerdotibus qualiter credant. Et quoniam Galaad interpretatur acervus testimonii, recte per Galaaditas sacerdotes Ecclesiae intelliguntur, qui praedicationibus suis opera divina testantur. Per Ephraim vero, qui fecunditatem sonat, illi designantur qui idcirco ad fidei perveniunt spicam ut proventum fecunditatis per boni operis segetem proferant. Sicut ergo ii qui ad Jordanem veniunt, spicam quidem intelligunt, sed quia exprimere nesciunt, moriuntur; ita et qui fontem baptismatis expetunt, a vita funditus decidunt, nisi fidem ipsam, quam edocti sunt credere, studuerint etiam bonorum operum enuntiatione proferre. Ita nimirum alterum pendet ex altero, ut semen fidei exsurgere debeat in spicam operationis. Quod et Salvator noster evidenter ostendit. Nam cum praeciperet discipulis, dicens: «Ite, docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti, protinus addidit: Docentes eos servare omnia quaecunque mandavi vobis (Matth. XXVIII).» Ac si aperte dicat: Semen fidei in cordibus hominum serite, et mox mandatorum germinantium spicam qualiter operationis lingua exprimere debeant, edocete, ne soloecismum faciant in spica operis, qui se de monte Ephraim, hoc est, de celsitudine esse testantur ecclesiasticae fecunditatis.

What differs between those who, as servants of sin, pay the tributes of harsh exaction, and those who, through the settled wars of contests, obtain the fillets of principalities. Among these princes indeed, and the warriors of the heavenly host, the blessed Anthimus shone distinguished, who did not yield to the bloody hands of the impious in persecution, and being placed in peace, truncated the monsters of rising vices with the spiritual sword of virtues. He exposed the members of his flesh to torments, he kept the bowels of the interior man unhurt. He did not fear to submit his head to the striking sword, so that he might deserve to adhere inseparably to Christ the head. For there was in him faith, not that which was dead in itself, but which worked through love. The faith of some is plainly vain, flaccid, pretending indeed on the surface a likeness, but not having truth within.

Moreover, they held the figure of those who, formerly coming from the people of Ephraim to the fords of the Jordan, while they did not know how to express *shibboleth* (Judges 12), but rather uttered *sibboleth* as if with a foreign tongue, were slain by the swords of the Gileadites. For what is understood by the Jordan, in which our Savior deigned to be baptized, but baptism? What truly by *shibboleth*, which is interpreted as an ear of corn (*spica*), but faith? For just as an ear of corn provides food for men, so it is said of faith: "that the just lives by faith" (Hab. 2; Rom. 1). And just as an ear of corn hides many grains in its awns, so also the symbol of our confession collects many seeds of faith in itself. Therefore, the Ephrathites coming to the Jordan are asked by the Gileadites how they express the ear of corn; the catechumens coming even to the washing of baptism are inquired of by the priests how they believe. And since Gilead is interpreted as a "heap of testimony," the priests of the Church are rightly understood by the Gileadites, who testify to divine works by their preachings. By Ephraim indeed, which sounds like "fecundity," those are designated who for this reason arrive at the ear of corn of faith, that they may bring forth the harvest of fecundity through the crop of good work. Therefore, just as those who come to the Jordan understand the ear of corn indeed, but because they do not know how to express it, they die; so also those who seek the font of baptism fall utterly from life, unless they study to bring forth that same faith, which they were taught to believe, also by the enunciation of good works. Thus indeed the one depends on the other, so that the seed of faith ought to rise into the ear of corn of operation. Which also our Savior evidently showed. For when He commanded the disciples, saying: "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," He immediately added: "Teaching them to keep all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matth. 28). As if He clearly says: Sow the seed of faith in the hearts of men, and soon teach how they ought to express the ear of corn of the germinating commandments with the tongue of operation, lest they make a solecism in the ear of corn of work, who testify that they are from the mountain of Ephraim, that is, from the height of ecclesiastical fecundity.

Quapropter, dilectissimi, caveamus ne fides nostra superducto nos solius professionis colore decipiat, et tanquam inanis spica, vacantibus culmis, absque dilectionis medulla follescat. Imitemur fidem martyrum, per quam, vincentes regna terrarum, adepti sunt praemia promissa coelorum (Hebr. XI), Sit ergo fides nostra solida, sit vera, sit robusta, ut nunc eundo per fidem, perveniamus ad speciem, videndo per aenigmatis speculum (I Cor. XIII), quandoque perducamur ad ipsius summae veritatis obtutum, ubi nunc beatus martyr Anthimus, deposita sarcina corruptibilis carnis, stolam adeptus est angelicae claritatis. Ecce enim inter ignitos supernae Hierusalem lapides emicat: ecce inter purpuratas martyrum legiones victor et coronatus exsultat. Consummato quippe gloriosi certaminis cursu, eumdem ipsum in praemio beatae renumerationis accepit qui factus est et pretium cum redemit, Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum, qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XX.

DE SANCTO BONIFACIO MARTYRE (XIV MAII).

Beati Bonifacii gloriosa festivitas, fratres mei, dum cunctis Christi fidelibus commune fit gaudium, specialiter tamen peccatoribus ad promerendam veniam certae spei tribuit incrementum. Nam cum vitae ejus ac beatae consummationis gesta percurrimus, quid aliud invenimus quam quia stipula tartari, cedrus facta est paradisi? Atque, ut ita fatear, torris inferni factus est splendidum sidus coeli. De lupanari siquidem prodiit praeliaturus ad stadium, de stadio suspenditur ad tormentum, de tormento ducitur ad gladium, de gladio sublevatur victor et coronatus ad coelum. Per gradus nempe peccator iste ad vitam rediit, quia et per quosdam gradus is qui sine peccato est (I Petr. II), ad nostrae mortalitatis ima descendit. Hinc est quod ex persona sanctae Ecclesiae per Salomonem dicitur: «Ecce iste venit saliens in montibus, et transiliens colles (Cant. II).» Salvator etenim noster quasi quosdam saltus exhibuit, cum ad redimendum genus humanum venit.

Therefore, most dear ones, let us beware lest our faith deceive us with the color of profession alone brought over it, and like an empty ear of corn, with vacant stalks, it become flabby without the marrow of charity. Let us imitate the faith of the martyrs, through which, conquering the kingdoms of the earth, they obtained the promised rewards of the heavens (Hebr. 11). Let our faith therefore be solid, let it be true, let it be robust, so that now going through faith, we may arrive at the species, seeing through the mirror of an enigma (1 Cor. 13), and eventually be led to the sight of the supreme truth itself, where now the blessed martyr Anthimus, the burden of corruptible flesh being laid down, has obtained the robe of angelic brightness. For behold, he shines among the fiery stones of the supernal Jerusalem: behold, he exults as victor and crowned among the purple legions of the martyrs. For the course of the glorious contest being consummated, he received that same one in the reward of blessed remuneration who was made also the price when He redeemed him, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns through all ages of ages. Amen.

Sermon XX.

ON SAINT BONIFACE THE MARTYR (MAY 14).

The glorious feast of the blessed Boniface, my brothers, while it becomes a common joy to all the faithful of Christ, especially however to sinners it grants an increase of certain hope for deserving pardon. For when we run through the deeds of his life and blessed consummation, what else do we find than that the straw of hell (*tartari*) was made a cedar of paradise? And, if I may so confess, a firebrand of hell was made a splendid star of heaven. From a brothel (*lupanari*) indeed he came forth to fight in the stadium; from the stadium he is suspended for torment; from torment he is led to the sword; from the sword he is lifted victor and crowned to heaven. Truly by degrees this sinner returned to life, because also through certain degrees He who is without sin (1 Peter 2) descended to the depths of our mortality. Hence it is that from the person of the holy Church it is said through Solomon: "Behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, and leaping over the hills" (Cant. 2). For our Savior exhibited certain leaps, as it were, when He came to redeem the human race.

De coelo quippe venit in uterum Virginis, de utero venit in praesepe, de praesepe transit ad circumcisionem, de circumcisione ad templum, de templo ad baptismum, de baptismo ad crucem, de cruce ad mortem, de morte ad sepulcrum, postremo etiam descendit in infernum, ut inde sanctos suos erueret, quos ad coelestem gloriam calcato mortis imperio revocaret. Plane, ut nos post se currere faceret, istos pro nobis gradus manifestata per carnem Veritas ad nos descendendo disposuit, et quodammodo cujusdam mystici horologii sol justitiae Christus haec ad nos se inclinando momenta distinxit. Qui nimirum exsultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam (Psal. XVIII), ut nos ei ex corde diceremus: «Trahe me post te, curremus in odorem uguentorum tuorum (Cant. I).»

Et fortasse isti sunt gradus illius horologii, in quo rex Ezechias umbram reverti decem lineis petiit. Quod videlicet Isaias propheta in signum recuperandae salutis illius Dominum invocans protinus impetravit (Isa. XXXVIII). Descenderat itaque sol emensis jam decem gradibus horologii, sed per eosdem gradus iterum rediit. Quod videlicet signum esset, per quod se rex Ezechias saluti pristinae restituendum esse confideret. Enimvero nec genus humanum ad incolumitatem quam amiserat, de sui languoris aegrotatione convaluit, quandiu lux vera Christus decem eos quos enumeravimus mystici horologii gradus ad occasum se humiliando percurrit. Quanquam per umbram decem graduum et aliter supernae dispensationis possumus intelligere sacramentum. Diversitates quippe temporum quasi quaedam distinctiones sunt in horologio linearum. Soli namque justitiae Christo primus ad nos descensionis gradus fuit de Deo in angelum. Unde est quod et per Isaiam magni consilii Angelus dicitur (Isai. IX). Et qui cum Jacob loquebatur Deus, angelus nuncupatur. Hinc est quod per eumdem Jacob dicitur: «Dixit angelus Domini ad me in somnis: Ego sum Deus Bethel, ubi unxisti lapidem et votum vovisti mihi (Gen. XXXI).» Nimirum, ut idem ipse qui loquitur, et Deus simul et angelus ostendatur. Secundus descensionis gradus fuit in patriarchis, per quos scilicet ipse Dominus unius Dei cultum ac verae fidei fundamenta constituit. Tertius in promulgatione legis, quam et ipse prius audiente populo protulit, et postmodum in lapideis tabulis proprio digito exarante descripsit.

For from heaven He came into the womb of the Virgin, from the womb He came into the manger, from the manger He passes to the circumcision, from the circumcision to the temple, from the temple to baptism, from baptism to the cross, from the cross to death, from the death to the sepulcher, finally He even descended into hell, that from there He might rescue His saints, whom He might recall to heavenly glory, the empire of death being trodden under foot. Plainly, so that He might make us run after Him, Truth manifested through the flesh disposed these degrees for us by descending to us, and Christ the Sun of Justice distinguished these moments by inclining Himself toward us, as if of a certain mystical horologe. Who indeed exulted as a giant to run the way (Psalm 18), so that we might say to Him from the heart: "Draw me after thee, we will run in the odor of thy ointments" (Cant. 1).

And perhaps these are the degrees of that horologe, in which King Hezekiah asked that the shadow return by ten lines. Which indeed the prophet Isaiah, invoking the Lord for a sign of recovering health, immediately obtained (Isa. 38). For the sun had descended, the ten degrees of the horologe having already been measured, but through the same degrees it returned again. Which indeed was a sign by which King Hezekiah might trust that he was to be restored to his former health. But indeed neither did the human race convalesce from the sickness of its languor to the health which it had lost, as long as Christ the true light ran through those ten degrees of the mystical horologe which we have enumerated, by humbling Himself toward the sunset. Although through the shadow of the ten degrees we can understand the sacrament of supernal dispensation in another way. For the diversities of times are like certain distinctions of lines in the horologe. For the first degree of descent to us for Christ the Sun of Justice was from God into an angel. Whence it is that also through Isaiah He is called the Angel of great counsel (Isa. 9). And the God who spoke with Jacob is called an angel. Hence it is that it is said through the same Jacob: "The angel of the Lord said to me in a dream: I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the stone and vowedst a vow to me" (Gen. 31). Surely, so that He Himself who speaks might be shown to be both God and angel at the same time. The second degree of descent was in the patriarchs, through whom indeed the Lord Himself constituted the cult of one God and the foundations of true faith. The third in the promulgation of the law, which He Himself first brought forth in the hearing of the people, and afterwards described in stone tablets with His own finger writing.

Quartus in Jesu Nave, in quo sicut nomine sic et opere degens in terram repromissionis populum introduxit. Quintus fuit gradus in judicibus, per quos nimirum Israeliticam plebem et ipse regebat. Sextus in regibus Judaeorum, quia in eis principaliter ipse regnabat. Septimus in prophetis, quia per eos ipse et annuntiatus est et locutus. Octavus in pontificibus, in quibus ipse, qui summus est Pontifex, veri et aeterni sui sacerdotii mysterium figuravit. Nonus autem gradus designatus est in homine. Decimus in passione. Per hos itaque decem gradus, quasi per umbram Veteris Testamenti, sol justitiae Christus in nostrae mortalitatis descendit occasum, et per eos iterum post resurrectionem suam in coelum victor ascendit, omnemque illam vetustae legis umbram veritatis suae ac novae gratiae radiis illustravit, obscura revelans, clausa reserans, et omnia sub velamine litterae tecta denudans. Et sicut tunc sol lineatim quidem ac morose processerat, repente autem ad ortus sui est reversus originem; sic nimirum, sic Redemptor noster ea quae de incarnationis suae mysterio per longa temporum intervalla signaverat, in sola resurrectionis atque ascensionis suae gloria subito patefecit. Non ergo mirum, si B. Bonifacius quibusdam gradibus pertingere meruit ad coronam, quandoquidem et Auctor salutis humanae pro charitate nostra, velut per quasdam dispensationis suae lineas, descendit ad poenam. Descendit hic ad occasum, ut ille rediret ad ortum. Pertulit Dominus vesperam temporalitatis nostrae, ut nos reduceret ad lumen in occiduum perennitatis suae. Sed considerandum est, fratres mei, quomodo B. Bonifacium inter ipsas reprobae vitae tenebras sanctitatis igniculus non deseruit, sed tandiu illum in minimis fovit, donec ad magna perduxit. Erat enim, sicut in gestorum ejus continetur historia, ebriosus et adulter, et omnium vitiorum amicus quae odit Deus.

Audivimus obscurissimas tenebras pravitatis, videamus etiam sublucere vel tenuem scintillulam rectitudinis. Habebat, inquit, hospitalitatem, largitatem et misericordiam; quae tamen tria unum sunt, et unius membra sunt charitatis. Sequitur adhuc historia, et quod breviter praemisit, exponit: qui si aliquando, inquit, videret peregrinum, aut de itinere venientem, cum omni festinatione et alacritate hortabatur hospitium suum ingredi, et ministrabat ei; noctibus autem circuibat plateas et vicos civitatis, tribuens eis quae necessaria erant.

The fourth in Joshua (Jesus Nave), in whom, as in name so also in work, living He introduced the people into the land of promise. The fifth degree was in the judges, through whom indeed He Himself ruled the Israelite people. The sixth in the kings of the Jews, because in them He Himself principally reigned. The seventh in the prophets, because through them He Himself was both announced and spoke. The eighth in the pontiffs, in whom He Himself, who is the High Priest, figured the mystery of His true and eternal priesthood. The ninth degree was designated in man. The tenth in the passion. Through these ten degrees, therefore, as if through the shadow of the Old Testament, Christ the Sun of Justice descended into the sunset of our mortality, and through them again after His resurrection He ascended victor into heaven, and illustrated all that shadow of the old law with the rays of His truth and new grace, revealing obscure things, opening closed things, and denuding all things covered under the veil of the letter. And just as then the sun had proceeded line by line and slowly, but suddenly returned to the origin of its rising; so indeed, so our Redeemer suddenly made manifest those things which He had signified concerning the mystery of His incarnation through long intervals of time, in the sole glory of His resurrection and ascension. It is not therefore a wonder, if the blessed Boniface deserved to reach the crown by certain degrees, since even the Author of human salvation, for our charity, as if through certain lines of His dispensation, descended to punishment. He descended here to the sunset, so that he might return to the sunrise. The Lord bore the evening of our temporality, that He might lead us back to the light in the sunset-less perenniality of His own. But it is to be considered, my brothers, how between the very shadows of a reprobate life the spark of holiness did not desert the blessed Boniface, but fostered him in small things for so long, until it led him to great ones. For he was, as is contained in the history of his deeds, a drunkard and an adulterer, and a friend of all the vices which God hates.

We have heard the most obscure shadows of depravity, let us see also even a thin spark of rectitude shining. He had, it says, hospitality, largesse, and mercy; which three things nevertheless are one, and are members of one charity. The history still follows, and what it briefly premissed, it explains: who if ever, it says, he saw a stranger, or one coming from a journey, with all haste and alacrity he exhorted him to enter his lodging, and ministered to him; but at nights he went around the squares and streets of the city, bestowing upon them those things which were necessary.

Ecce inter densissima horrescentium dumeta spinarum, etsi rara, tamen inventa sunt lilia floresque virtutum. Et multae sunt plagae, quae volucrem Domini terratenus aggravant; paucae pennae, quae levant. Sed facile est medico animarum Deo patentia vulnera tenui medicamento componere, et ubi sanum quid reperit, caetera, quae circumquaque putrida sunt, ad salutem pristinam revocare. Porro autem, sicut mari possibile est unius hominis corpus abluere, ita Deo perfacile est, quantumlibet lapsi, quantumlibet peccatoris hominis animam ab omni reatus squalore purgare. Sed sicut quis quandiu in monte consistit, marinis fluctibus non abluitur, ita peccator quandiu in tumore superbiae perseverat, licet larga sit, divinae pietatis eum abundantia non expurgat. Accedat ergo per poenitentiam ad fontem misericordiae, qui desiderat ablui a contagiis culpae. Et qui sibi a Deo fieri misericordiam postulat, ipse quoque misericordiae viscera proximis indigentibus clementer impendat. Videtis, fratres charissimi, quia beatum hunc Bonifacium de tot flagitiis quae commisit, solum opus misericordiae liberavit. Ut non modo peccatorum nexus evaderet, sed etiam insignibus victoriae titulis ad felicem martyrii gloriam perveniret. Et quidem non erat dignus ut a Deo susciperetur, sed dando sua, promeruit ut semetipsum Deo sacrificium daret, et, qui eatenus carnaliter vixerat, spiritualem se hostiam in odorem suavitatis offerret.

Nonnulli namque prius semetipsos offerunt, postmodum sua. Sicut de primi parentis filio scriptum est: «Respexit Dominus ad Abel et ab munera ejus (Gen. IV).» Sicut enim Abel semetipsum Deo prius obtulerat, et postmodum munera offerebat, ita et Dominus prius ad ipsum, deinde ad ejus munera respexisse perhibetur. Nonnulli vero in primis quae sua sunt offerunt, deinde semetipsos, meritis adjuvantibus, superaddunt. Sicut Cornelius ille centurio, qui gentilis adhuc eleemosynis et orationibus institit. Quibus videlicet suffragantibus, ad baptismi postmodum sacramenta pervenit. Cui profecto angelus, necdum percepta regenerationis gratia, dixit: «Orationes tuae et eleemosynae tuae ascenderunt in memoriam in conspectu Domini, et nunc mitte viros in Joppen, et accersi Simonem Petrum. Hic dicet tibi quid te oporteat facere (Act. X).» Ac si perspicue diceret: jam Deo quae tua sunt obtulisti, de caetero nihil superest, nisi ut et ipse debeas munus longe praestantius tuis muneribus superaddi, tuisque te facultatibus possessor adjicias, ut unum ex omnibus, non jam sacrificium, sed holocaustum, potius fiat.

Behold, among the thickest thickets of horrifying thorns, although rare, nevertheless lilies and flowers of virtues were found. And many are the blows which weigh down the bird of the Lord to the earth; few are the feathers which lift it up. But it is easy for God the physician of souls to compose the patent wounds with a thin medicine, and where He finds anything healthy, to recall the other things, which are putrid all around, to their former health. Moreover, just as it is possible for the sea to wash the body of one man, so it is very easy for God to purge the soul of a man, however fallen, however a sinner, from all the squalor of guilt. But just as one as long as he consists in a mountain is not washed by the marine waves, so a sinner as long as he perseveres in the tumor of pride, although it be large, the abundance of divine piety does not expurgate him. Let him approach therefore through penance to the font of mercy, who desires to be washed from the contagions of fault. And he who asks that mercy be made to him by God, let him also mercifully expend the bowels of mercy upon his neighboring indigent. You see, most dear brothers, that the sole work of mercy delivered this blessed Boniface from so many crimes which he committed. So that not only would he escape the bonds of sins, but also would reach the happy glory of martyrdom with distinguished titles of victory. And indeed he was not worthy to be received by God, but by giving his own things, he merited to give himself as a sacrifice to God, and, who until then had lived carnally, to offer himself as a spiritual host in an odor of sweetness.

For some first offer themselves, afterwards their things. Just as it is written of the son of the first parent: "The Lord had respect to Abel and to his gifts" (Gen. 4). For just as Abel had first offered himself to God, and afterwards offered gifts, so also the Lord is said to have had respect first to him, then to his gifts. Some indeed first offer those things which are theirs, then they superadd themselves, with merits helping. Just as that centurion Cornelius, who while still a gentile insisted on alms and prayers. With which indeed suffragating, he arrived afterwards at the sacraments of baptism. To whom surely the angel, the grace of regeneration not yet having been perceived, said: "Thy prayers and thy alms have ascended for a memorial in the sight of the Lord; and now send men to Joppa, and call Simon Peter. He will tell thee what thou oughtest to do" (Acts 10). As if he clearly said: now thou hast offered to God those things which are thine, for the rest nothing remains, unless that thou also oughtest to be superadded as a far more excellent gift to thy gifts, and thou shouldst add thyself as possessor to thy faculties, so that one from all may become, not now a sacrifice, but rather a holocaust (*holocaustum*).

Ad hujus igitur centurionis exemplum B. Bonifacius prius dedit sua, postmodum se; quia juxta praeceptum legis (Exod. XII), agnum innocentiae in suis gregibus reperire non potuit, haedum poenitentiae semetipsum offerre curavit. Agnum siquidem innocentes, haedum offerunt peccatores. Nec mirum si quilibet sanctus post peccata conversus, haedus dicitur, cum et ipse qui de coelo pro peccatoribus venit, per hircum dignatus est figurari. Unde est quod in Levitico pontifex viventem hircum hoc modo jubetur offerre, ut posita super caput ejus utrasque manu, confiteatur omnes iniquitates filiorum Israel, et universa delicta atque peccata eorum, quae imprecans capiti ejus, emittat illum in desertum (Lev. XXVI [XVI]). Quid est autem hircum utrique manui pontificis subjici, nisi Filium hominis in similitudinem carnis peccati (Rom. VIII) venientem per voluntatem Dei, utriusque populi, Judaici videlicet et gentilis, persecutione gravari? Plane utriusque se voluit manibus subjacere, qui de jugo diaboli utrumque venerat populum liberare. Quid vero est quod post confessionem atque imprecationem omnium iniquitatum filiorum Israel super capita ejus hircus mittitur in desertum, nisi quia is qui peccata nostra portavit, qui legis maledicta sustinuit, protinus in desertum, ubi nonaginta novem reliquerat, ovem centesimam reportavit? (Matth. XVIII.) Unde et Apostolus: «Ut nos, inquit, liberaret a maledicto, ipse factus est maledictum (Gal. III).» Per hircum ergo figuratus est Dominus, qui pro peccatoribus venit. Haedum Bonifacius obtulit, qui sese ad portandam crucem ejus post peccata convertit. Et quia in lege praecipitur ut qui in primo mense Pascha facere non potuerit, faciat in secundo; primus autem mensis, prima est gratia. Beatus hic martyr, quia paschalem agnum non obtulerat in primo mense innocentis vitae, haedum obtulit in secundo, fructuosae videlicet poenitentiae. Qui dum quaerit honorare martyres, martyr efficitur, sicut et ille in hospitalitate non dispar Abdias, dum prophetas pascit in specubus, prophetandi gratiam et ipse meretur (III Reg. XVII [XVIII]).

Videtis, fratres charissimi, quanta coram Deo eleemosynae sit potentia; perpendite quanta imperatricis misericordiae sit majestas. Nonne enim haec videtur velut praepotens regina inter caeteras eminere virtutes, quae nimirum de communi plebe homines, alium quidem ad prophetiae provehit gratiam, alii martyrii dat coronam? Illi dat ut Ecclesiam Christi coelestis oraculi dapibus pascat; isti praebet ut ad supernae gloriae nuptiale convivium post victoriae palmam feliciter epulaturus accedat.

To the example of this centurion, therefore, the blessed Boniface first gave his things, afterwards himself; because according to the precept of the law (Exod. 12), he could not find a lamb of innocence in his flocks, he took care to offer himself as a kid of penance. For the innocent offer a lamb, sinners offer a kid. Nor is it a wonder if any saint converted after sins is called a kid, since He Himself who came from heaven for sinners deigned to be figured by a goat. Whence it is that in Leviticus the high priest is commanded to offer a living goat in this manner, that both hands being placed upon its head, he should confess all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their offenses and sins, which imprecating upon its head, he should send it out into the desert (Lev. 26 [16]). What is it for the goat to be subjected to both hands of the high priest, but for the Son of Man coming in the likeness of the flesh of sin (Rom. 8) to be weighed down by the persecution of both peoples, namely the Jewish and the Gentile? Plainly He wished to be subject to the hands of both, who had come to deliver both peoples from the yoke of the devil. But what is it that after the confession and imprecation of all the iniquities of the children of Israel upon its head the goat is sent into the desert, but that He who bore our sins, who sustained the curses of the law, immediately reported the hundredth sheep into the desert, where He had left the ninety-nine? (Matth. 18.) Whence also the Apostle: "That He might deliver us, he says, from the curse, He Himself was made a curse" (Gal. 3). By the goat therefore was figured the Lord, who came for sinners. Boniface offered a kid, who converted himself to bearing His cross after sins. And because in the law it is commanded that he who cannot make the Passover in the first month should make it in the second; but the first month is the first grace. This blessed martyr, because he had not offered the paschal lamb in the first month of an innocent life, offered a kid in the second, namely of fruitful penance. Who while he seeks to honor the martyrs, is made a martyr, just as also that Obadiah, not disparate in hospitality, while he feeds the prophets in caves, himself merits the grace of prophesying (3 Kings 17 [18]).

You see, most dear brothers, how great is the power of alms before God; consider how great is the majesty of empress mercy. For does not this seem to stand out like a preeminent queen among the other virtues, which indeed from the common people promotes some to the grace of prophecy, and to others gives the crown of martyrdom? To that one she gives to feed the Church of Christ with the banquets of the heavenly oracle; to this one she provides that, after the palm of victory, he may approach happily to feast at the nuptial banquet of supernal glory.

Habeamus ergo, fratres, misericordiam, ut et ipsi misericordiam consequamur; curemus eleemosynis et pietatis operibus, in quantum facultas permittit, insistere. Delectet hospitalitatis ac fraternae susceptionis studio deservire, ut qui coelestis curiae senatores aspicimus per pietatis opera tantae dignitatis gloriam meruisse, ipsi saltem procul dubio confidamus ad peccatorum nostrorum indulgentiam pervenire, Veritate pollicente, quae ait: «Beati misericordes, quoniam ipsis misericordiam dabit Deus (Matth. V),» qui unus et verus in Trinitate perfecta vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XXI.

DE SPIRITU SANCTO ET EJUS GRATIA. (XV MAII.)

Primo itaque notandum est, fratres mei, atque omni annisu memoriae commendandum quia, nisi quis gratia sancti Spiritus mereatur afflari, licet conetur, licet ad tempus eniti videatur, nunquam tamen ad bona peragenda prorsus assurgere, nunquam Deo placiti operis valet fructus afferre. Arbor namque solo radicitus fixa succos ex uligine concipit, quibus per interiora diffusis, et in incrementa se roboris erigit et germen emittit. Quique autem fideles arbores sumus intra sanctae nemus Ecclesiae, illius summi Agricolae dispositione plantati. Quam plantationem Paulus indicabat Ephesiis, cum dicebat: «Ut det vobis secundum divitias gloriae suae virtute corroborari per Spiritum ejus in interiorem hominem, Christum habitare per fidem in cordibus vestris, in charitate radicati et fundati (Ephes. III).»

Terra autem nostra, ubi spei nostrae radix innititur, illa profecto est de qua per Psalmistam dicitur: «Portio mea in terra viventium (Psal. CXLI);» sive etiam humanitas Christi, de qua idem propheta alibi perhibet, dicens: «Etenim firmavit orbem terrae, qui non commovebitur (Psal. XCII).» Si ergo ut infructuosae arbores arescere nolumus, si securibus excidi ac deputari ignibus inutiliter formidamus, in illa supernorum civium patria, in humanitate Redemptoris nostri per charitatis glutinum spei nostrae radix semper inhaereat, ut ad proferendos bonae operationis fructus, in robur fortitudinis firmiter convalescat. Sed sicut arbor si vegetantis succi humore deseritur, protinus exsiccatur, sic et anima nostra, nisi Spiritus sancti gratiae fuerit rore perfusa, funditus arefacta, ad nullius sanctae operationis germen poterit esse fecunda. Ille enim lumen mentibus ingerit, desiderium excitat, vires infundit. Illustrat siquidem, ut videamus; provocat, ut velimus; roborat, ut bona quae volumus implere valeamus. Ex illa nempe fecunditate prodeunt lacrymae nostrae, ex illa compunctiones mentium, ex illa confessio peccatorum. Sicut enim anima est vita corporis, ita et vita animae nostrae Spiritus sanctus est.

Let us have mercy, therefore, brothers, so that we also may obtain mercy; let us take care to insist on alms and works of piety, in as much as faculty permits. Let it delight to serve with the study of hospitality and fraternal reception, so that we who behold the senators of the heavenly court to have deserved the glory of such great dignity through works of piety, may ourselves at least trust without doubt to arrive at the indulgence of our sins, Truth promising, who says: "Blessed are the merciful, for God will give them mercy" (Matth. 5), who one and true in perfect Trinity lives and reigns for ages of ages. Amen.

Sermon XXI.

ON THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS GRACE (MAY 15).

First, therefore, it must be noted, my brothers, and committed to memory with all effort, that unless one deserves to be breathed upon by the grace of the Holy Spirit, although he may try, although he may seem to strive for a time, yet he can never rise to perform good deeds, never can he bring forth the fruits of a work pleasing to God. For a tree, fixed by its roots in the soil, conceives juices from the moisture, which, being diffused through its inner parts, both raises it in the strength of its vigor and puts forth a bud. And we who are faithful are trees within the grove of the holy Church, planted by the disposition of that supreme Husbandman. Paul indicated this planting to the Ephesians when he said: "That he may grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell through faith in your hearts, being rooted and grounded in charity (Ephes. 3)."

But our earth, where the root of our hope rests, is surely that of which it is said through the Psalmist: "My portion in the land of the living (Psal. 141);" or even the humanity of Christ, of which the same prophet elsewhere testifies, saying: "For he has established the world, which shall not be moved (Psal. 91)." If, therefore, we do not wish to wither like unfruitful trees, if we fear to be cut down by axes and uselessly assigned to the fires, let the root of our hope always cling through the glue of charity in that fatherland of the supernal citizens, in the humanity of our Redeemer, so that it may firmly grow strong in the vigor of fortitude to bring forth the fruits of good operation. But just as a tree, if it is deserted by the moisture of its life-giving juice, immediately withers, so also our soul, unless it has been bedewed by the dew of the grace of the Holy Spirit, being thoroughly dried up, will be unable to be fruitful for the bud of any holy operation. For He brings light into minds, excites desire, and pours in strength. Indeed, He enlightens that we may see; He provokes that we may will; He strengthens that we may be able to fulfill the good things we will. From that fecundity, indeed, our tears proceed, from that the compunctions of minds, from that the confession of sins. For as the soul is the life of the body, so also the Holy Spirit is the life of our soul.

Et sicut corpus nostrum, anima recedente, collabitur, ita et eadem anima, si Spiritus vivificator abscesserit, necesse est moriatur, sine cujus videlicet munere nec ad agnitionem Dei qualibet ratione pertingere, nec ea quae Dei sunt possumus aliquatenus penetrare, Apostolo teste, qui ait: «Spiritus sanctus omnia scrutatur, etiam profunda Dei (I Cor. II).» Cui mox sententiae consequenter adjungit: «Quis enim scit hominum quae sunt hominis, nisi spiritus hominis, qui in ipso est? (Ibid.)» ita et quae Dei sunt, nemo cognovit, nisi Spiritus Dei.

Sed an vultis, fratres charissimi, fortassis inquirere qui scire possumus an habeamus Spiritum Dei? In hoc profecto constat quia Spiritum Dei habetis, si Deum vere cognoscitis. Si enim, juxta apostolica verba «nemo quae Dei sunt novit, nisi Spiritus Dei (Ibid.),» quis ipsum posset Deum cognoscere, nisi ejus Spiritum mereretur habere. Sed hoc ipsum forsitan adhuc vobis in dubium venit an cognoscatis Deum. Sed audite Joannem apostolum dicentem: «Qui dicit se nosse Deum, et mandata ejus non custodit, mendax est (I Joan. II).» Ille igitur vere Deum cognoscit, qui ejus mandata custodit. Unde et ille perfectus mandatorum Dei custos securus aiebat: «Nos spiritum hujus mundi non accepimus, sed Spiritum Dei, qui ex Deo est (I Cor. II).»

Quis est autem spiritus mundi? Ille profecto est qui suadet homines divina praecepta contemnere, terrenis negotiis delectabiliter insudare, mundanae dominationis culmen appetere, carnalis illecebrae passionibus turpiter subjacere, transitoriae possessionis fines extendere, tumido superbiae fastu super proximos jura potestatis ambire. Econtra, Spiritus qui ex Deo est, quas replet mentes ad coelestia provocat, et, expulso corporis et negligentiae frigore, ad amorem divinum inflammat, petulantia carnis desideria reprimit, et liberum cor ab omni terrena delectatione suspendit. Ille reddit hominem ad despicienda prospera rigidum, ad adversa superanda robustum; ille exhibet bene viventibus humiliter subditum; ille objicit prave agentibus in jura liberae auctoritatis erectum; ille, quem replet prudenter inebriat, atque a sensu vitae praesentis scienter alienat. An non erant illi divina sobrietate veraciter ebrii, de quibus a male insanientibus dicebatur: «Quia musto pleni sunt isti (Act. II).» Nunquid non quaedam divina ebrietas est, praesentia et prae oculis posita cuncta despicere, atque ad ea quae non videntur, toto mentis desiderio medullitus anhelare, mollia quaeque et jucunda contemnere, dura vero, et aspera pro divino libenter amore perferre? Hanc ebrietatem, fratres mei, continuae nobis necesse est orationis instantia quaerere; hanc, velut aridis mentis nostrae faucibus tota debemus intentione sitire.

And as our body, when the soul departs, collapses, so also the same soul, if the life-giving Spirit has departed, must necessarily die; without whose gift, namely, we can neither reach the knowledge of God by any reason, nor can we in any way penetrate those things which are of God, as the Apostle testifies, who says: "The Holy Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2)." To which sentence he immediately joins as a consequence: "For who among men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of the man which is in him? (Ibid.)" even so the things that are of God, no one has known except the Spirit of God.

But do you wish, most dear brothers, perhaps to inquire how we can know whether we have the Spirit of God? In this it surely consists: that you have the Spirit of God if you truly know God. For if, according to the apostolic words, "no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God (Ibid.)," who could know God Himself, unless he deserved to have His Spirit? But this itself perhaps still comes into doubt for you, whether you know God. But hear John the Apostle saying: "He who says he knows God, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar (1 John 2)." He, therefore, truly knows God, who keeps His commandments. Whence also that perfect keeper of the commandments of God said securely: "We have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit of God, who is from God (1 Cor. 2)."

But what is the spirit of the world? It is surely that which persuades men to despise divine precepts, to sweat delightfully in earthly businesses, to desire the summit of worldly domination, to be shamefully subject to the passions of carnal allurements, to extend the boundaries of transitory possession, to seek the rights of power over neighbors with the swollen pride of arrogance. On the contrary, the Spirit which is from God provokes to heavenly things the minds which He fills, and, the cold of body and negligence being expelled, inflames to divine love, represses petulant desires of the flesh, and suspends the free heart from all earthly delight. He makes a man rigid to despise prosperity, robust to overcome adversity; He exhibits him humbly subject to those living well; He sets him up in the rights of free authority against those acting wickedly; He whom He fills, He prudently inebriates, and knowingly alienates from the sense of the present life. Were they not truly drunk with divine sobriety, of whom it was said by those evilly insane: "Because these are full of new wine (Acts 2)?" Is it not indeed a certain divine ebriety to despise all things present and placed before the eyes, and to pant from the innermost heart with all desire of the mind for those things which are not seen, to despise all things soft and pleasant, but to bear willingly things hard and sharp for the sake of divine love? This ebriety, my brothers, we must seek with the insistence of continuous prayer; for this, as if with the parched throats of our mind, we ought to thirst with all intention.

Quaerat ergo assidue anima nostra hunc Spiritum, quo vegetante vivat, quo illustrante videat, quo docente sapiat, quo duce, inoffenso amoris cursu ad patriam tendat. Quaeramus itaque a Deo nostro, non quod quilibet pauperes ab hujus mundi divitibus quaerunt, non videlicet nummum, non digestibilem cibum, non nudi corporis indumentum. Scit enim ille qui ad haec nos esse sollicitos vetat, quia his omnibus indigemus. Illud itaque flagitemus quod et nobis est prae omnibus necessarium, et ille magis dare petentibus delectatur. Illud, inquam, ab eo sine cessatione quaeramus ad quod nos ipse et quaerendum provocat, et ad sperandum certa promissione confirmat. dicens: Quia si petimus, si pulsamus, «aperietur nobis; et Pater noster de coelo dabit spiritum bonum petentibus se (Matth. VII; Luc. XI).» Sed qui e divite nostro eleemosynam quaerimus, ut impetrandi copia concedatur, quaerendi formam ab hujus etiam mundi pauperibus mutuemur. Pauperes enim cum ab altiora degentibus aliquid accipere gestiunt, ora mox sacculorum laxant, et sic ad accipiendum parati, quibus praevalent vocibus clamant, ut dum sic paratus quisque per speculare domus aspicitur, facile misericordiam consequatur.

Sacculus quidem noster, cor nostrum est, in quod si volumus nova coelestis gratiae dona suscipere, ab omni terrena concupiscentia, fermento videlicet veteri necesse est vacuare. Cujus profecto sacculi sinum indubitanter expandimus, si perfecti amoris incendio donis coelestibus inhiamus. Hujus sacculi bene Paulus ora laxaverat, cum dicebat: «Os nostrum patet ad vos, o Corinthii, cor nostrum dilatatum est (II Cor. VI).» Hunc laxare et illos monuit, cum subjunxit: «Non angustiamini in nobis. Et paulo post: Tanquam filiis dico, dilatamini et vos (Ibid.).» Consideremus etiam quomodo se pauper ille ad percipienda de supernis munera praeparaverat, cum clamabat, cum vociferabatur, cum precabatur, cum interioris organi voces ingeminabat, dicens: «Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum (Psal. LVI, CVII).» Ac si aperte dicat: Cor meum, Domine, ad capienda tuae largitatis munera praeparo, qui a cunctis hoc pravae cogitationis squaloribus purgo, nihilque in eo relinquitur, quo gratiae tuae munus desuper veniens refundatur. Ego curavi quae intus male servabantur egerere, tu illud accelera domo tuae pietatis dignanter implere. Cor meum vacuefactum atque ad te paratum teneo, quia effossis ex eo vitiorum ruderibus ad amplectendam tui Spiritus gratiam tota mentis intentione suspiro. Ecce pauper Dei cor tenes paratum, qui a pravis illud servas cogitationibus mundum. Sed nisi clamantem, nisi vociferantem audiat quis de eminentioris coenaculi penetralibus eleemosynam pauperi porrecturus, nemo accedat.

Therefore, let our soul seek assiduously this Spirit, by whose life-giving power it may live, by whose enlightening it may see, by whose teaching it may be wise, by whose leadership it may tend toward the fatherland in the unoffended course of love. Let us, therefore, seek from our God, not what any poor people seek from the rich of this world, namely, not a coin, not digestible food, not a garment for the naked body. For He who forbids us to be solicitous for these things knows that we need all these. Let us, therefore, demand that which is necessary for us above all things, and which He is more delighted to give to those who ask. That, I say, let us seek from Him without ceasing, to the seeking of which He Himself both provokes us, and confirms us to hope for with a certain promise, saying: That if we ask, if we knock, "it shall be opened to us; and our Father from heaven will give the good spirit to those who ask Him (Matth. 7; Luke 11)." But we who seek alms from our Rich One, so that the abundance of obtaining may be granted, let us borrow the form of seeking even from the poor of this world. For the poor, when they desire to receive something from those living in higher places, soon loosen the mouths of their purses, and thus prepared to receive, they cry out with the voices in which they prevail, so that while each one thus prepared is seen through the window of the house, he may easily obtain mercy.

Our purse, indeed, is our heart, into which if we wish to receive the new gifts of heavenly grace, it is necessary to empty it of all earthly concupiscence, namely, of the old leaven. We surely expand the bosom of this purse without doubt if we pant for heavenly gifts with the fire of perfect love. Paul had well loosened the mouths of this purse when he said: "Our mouth is open to you, O Corinthians, our heart is dilated (2 Cor. 6)." He warned them also to loosen it, when he added: "You are not straitened in us. And a little after: I speak as to my children, be you also enlarged (Ibid.)." Let us also consider how that poor man had prepared himself to perceive the gifts from above, when he cried out, when he shouted, when he prayed, when he redoubled the voices of the internal organ, saying: "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready (Psal. 56, 107)." As if he said openly: I prepare my heart, Lord, to take the gifts of Thy bounty, who purge this from all the squalor of evil thought, and nothing is left in it by which the gift of Thy grace coming from above may be poured back. I have taken care to cast out the things that were badly kept within, do Thou hasten to fill it worthily from the house of Thy piety. I hold my heart emptied and ready for Thee, because, the rubbish of vices being dug out of it, I sigh with all intention of mind to embrace the grace of Thy Spirit. Behold, you hold the heart of the poor man of God ready, you who keep it clean from evil thoughts. But unless someone hears the one crying out, unless someone hears the one shouting from the inner chambers of the higher dining room, about to reach out alms to the poor man, let no one approach.

Postquam ergo dixit: «Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum; protinus addidit: Cantabo, et psalmum dicam Domino (Ibid.);» tanquam diceret: cor utique meum praeparo, et voces importunae postulationis emitto, ut et vox ad miserendum audita permoveat; et paratum cor, id quod ex largitate miserentis emittitur non effundat.

Haec nempe duo, fratres mei, vobis permaxime necessaria sunt, qui eremi remotiora studio singularitatis incolitis, qui contemplativae vitae speculationibus insudatis. Expedit vobis assidue psalmorum modulationi, et crebris orationibus vigilanter insistere, et contra cogitationum ingruentium impetus omni virtutum conamine dimicare. Eliminemus igitur omnes spurcitias de nostri cordis hospitio, et quibus possumus variis virtutum floribus aspergamus. Delectetur Deus nitidum nostri pectoris tabernaculum ingredi, et suavibus in eo bonorum operum deliciis epulari. Sicque praeparato atque composito decoro intimae domus ornatu, psallamus, oremus, et quibus illum possumus clamosae mentis supplicationibus invitemus. Sicque complebitur in nobis prophetica vox illa, qua dicitur: «Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum; cantabo, et psalmum dicam Domino.» Deprecemur ergo assidue Redemptorem nostrum et totis illum visceribus imploremus, ut cor nostrum dignetur clementer invisere, et dimota omni vitiorum caligine, gratia sancti Spiritus illustrare, quatenus quo in illum regenerante credimus, eodem inspirante, recto tramite ad ipsum pervenire valeamus. Qui cum Deo Patre et eodem Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

JUNIUS. III. Sermo de SS. martyribus Laurentino et Pergentino fratribus. XXIV. Sermo in Nativitate S. Joan. Baptistae. Sermo II de eadem. Sermo III de eadem. XXIX. Sermo de S. Petro apostolo. Sermo de SS. Petro et Paulo apost.

Sermo XXII.

DE SS. LAURENTINO ET PERGENTINO. (III JUN.)

Hodierna festivitas, dilectissimi, sicut nostis, in honore beatorum martyrum Laurentini et Pergentini venerabiliter colitur, et quasi duobus aureis sideribus eorum dies natalitius illustratur. Hoc plane geminum sidus si diligenter attendimus, per hujus vitae pelagus navigantes errare non possumus, sed post emensa fluctuum procellarumque discrimina ad sinum quieti portus cum gaudio pervenimus. Unde non sine quodam dispositionis supernae praesagio tale vocabulum sortiti sunt, ut Pergentinus dicantur et Laurentinus.

After he said, therefore: "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready; immediately he added: I will sing, and I will say a psalm to the Lord (Ibid.);" as if he were saying: I indeed prepare my heart, and I emit voices of importunate petition, so that both the heard voice may move to pity; and the ready heart may not pour out that which is emitted from the bounty of the one pitying.

These two things indeed, my brothers, are especially necessary for you, who inhabit the more remote parts of the desert with the study of singularity, who sweat in the speculations of the contemplative life. It is expedient for you to insist vigilantly on the assiduous modulation of the psalms and on frequent prayers, and to fight against the onslaughts of ingressing thoughts with all the endeavor of virtues. Let us, therefore, eliminate all filth from the guest-chamber of our heart, and let us sprinkle it with the various flowers of virtues as we can. May God be delighted to enter the bright tabernacle of our breast, and to feast on the sweet delicacies of good works in it. And thus, with the decorous ornament of the inner house prepared and composed, let us sing psalms, let us pray, and let us invite Him with whatever supplications of a clamorous mind we can. And thus will be fulfilled in us that prophetic voice, by which it is said: "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready; I will sing, and I will say a psalm to the Lord." Let us, therefore, assiduously deprecate our Redeemer and implore Him with all our bowels, that He may deign clemently to visit our heart, and, all darkness of vices being removed, to enlighten it by the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that we may be able to reach Him by a right path, Him in whom we believe as the one regenerating, by His inspiration. Who with God the Father and the same Holy Spirit lives and reigns for all ages of ages. Amen.

JUNE. III. Sermon on the holy martyrs the brothers Laurentinus and Pergentinus. XXIV. Sermon on the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. Sermon II on the same. Sermon III on the same. XXIX. Sermon on St. Peter the Apostle. Sermon on the SS. Apostles Peter and Paul.

Sermon XXII.

ON SS. LAURENTINUS AND PERGENTINUS (JUNE 3).

Today's festivity, most beloved, as you know, is venerably celebrated in honor of the blessed martyrs Laurentinus and Pergentinus, and their birthday is enlightened as if by two golden stars. If we carefully attend to this double star, we who navigate through the sea of this life cannot err, but after the measured dangers of floods and storms we arrive with joy at the bosom of the quiet port. Whence not without a certain presage of supernal disposition did they obtain such a name, that they are called Pergentinus and Laurentinus.

Pergunt enim uterque simul ad lauream, et praecedentes nos, si non eos sequi negligimus, provocant ad coronam. Omnes enim quicunque non segnes, sed ferventes et agiles ad patriam properant, non in itinere gressus figunt, sed pergentes assidue de virtutibus in virtutes, de bonis ad meliora contendunt. Nec in hujus peregrinationis itinere cives se vel habitatores ostendunt, sed velut hospites semper et exsules transeunt. Unde et Petrus: «Obsecro, inquit, vos tanquam advenas et peregrinos abstinere vos a carnalibus desideriis quae militant adversus animam (I Petr. II).» Et Paulus ait: «Non habemus hic manentem civitatem, sed futuram inquirimus (Hebr. XII).» Hinc etiam Paulus ille, qui progrediens ex Aegypto terram repromissionis ingressus est Hebraeus, id est, transiens vocatus est. Et quicunque de vitae carnalis Aegypto, terram quae mel et lac fluit ingredimur, non vestigia figere, sed assidue transire jubemur, ut juxta Joannem, «qui justus est, justificetur adhuc, et qui sanctus est, sanctificetur adhuc (Apoc. XXII).» Lac etenim de carne fluit, mel de superioribus in ima descendit. Et quae est illa terra, lactis scilicet ac mellis irrigua, ad quam tantopere provocamur, nisi Mediatoris Dei et hominum una persona? In qua nimirum et caro manifesta est, quae de Virgine prodiit, et divinitatis interna dulcedo, quae de substantia paterna processit.

Ad quam sane terram nonnisi Hebraeus, imo, ut ita loquar, nemo, nisi Pergentinus et Laurentinus, admittitur; quia quisquis pervenire laborat ad Christum, necesse est ut nequaquam in hoc mundo mentis suae figat velut in habitatione vestigium: sed Hebraeum se semper ostendens, et cum Pergentino per viam justitiae transiens pergat, et cum Laurentino simul de suis laboribus non hujus vitae commoda, sed coronam tantummodo gloriae concupiscat. De habitatoribus etenim hujus mundi, sicut in Apocalypsi dicitur, beati martyres clamant: «Quousque Dominus (sanctus et verus) non vindicas sanguinem nostrum de iis qui habitant in terra? (Apoc. VI.)» De his vero qui non habitant, sed pergendo jugiter transeunt, Isaias postquam praemittit: «Habitabit lupus cum agno, et pardus cum haedo accubabit, vitulus, et leo, et ovis simul morabuntur,» protinus addidit: «et puer parvulus minabit eos (Isa. XI).» Quis est iste puer parvulus, nisi is de quo per eumdem prophetam dicitur: «Puer natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis? (Isa. IX.)»

For both proceed together to the laurel, and preceding us, if we do not neglect to follow them, they provoke us to the crown. For all who are not sluggish, but fervent and agile, hasten to the fatherland, they do not fix their steps on the way, but proceeding assiduously from virtues to virtues, they strive from good things to better. Nor on the journey of this pilgrimage do they show themselves as citizens or inhabitants, but they pass through always as guests and exiles. Whence also Peter: "I beseech you," he says, "as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul (1 Pet. 2)." And Paul says: "We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one to come (Hebr. 12)." Hence also that Paul, who proceeding from Egypt entered the land of promise, was called Hebrew, that is, passing through. And whoever of us enters the land which flows with milk and honey from the Egypt of carnal life, is commanded not to fix footsteps, but assiduously to pass through, so that according to John, "he who is just, let him be justified still, and he who is holy, let him be sanctified still (Apoc. 22)." For milk flows from the flesh, honey descends from higher things into the depths. And what is that land, watered indeed with milk and honey, to which we are so greatly provoked, if not the one person of the Mediator of God and men? In which indeed both the flesh is manifest, which came forth from the Virgin, and the internal sweetness of divinity, which proceeded from the paternal substance.

To which land indeed no one is admitted unless a Hebrew, nay, as I may so speak, no one unless a Pergentinus and a Laurentinus; because whoever labors to arrive at Christ, it is necessary that he in no way fix the footstep of his mind in this world as if in a habitation: but always showing himself a Hebrew, let him both proceed with Pergentinus passing through the way of justice, and at the same time with Laurentinus let him desire from his labors not the advantages of this life, but only the crown of glory. For concerning the inhabitants of this world, as is said in the Apocalypse, the blessed martyrs cry out: "How long, O Lord (holy and true), dost thou not revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? (Apoc. 6)." But concerning those who do not dwell, but by proceeding continually pass through, Isaiah, after he premises: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf, and the lion, and the sheep shall abide together," immediately added: "and a little child shall lead them (Isa. 11)." Who is this little child, if not He of whom it is said through the same prophet: "A child is born to us, and a Son is given to us? (Isa. 9)."

Qui simul inhabitantes minat, quia ne corda nostra terrenis rebus inhaereant praedonem desiderii coelestis indesinenter inflammat. Et hoc ipsum minare, est ad suum nos amorem flamma continuae charitatis accendere; ne cum nos vicario simul amore diligimus, ejus, ad quem redire debebamus, obliti, mente in hoc exsilio remaneamus. Puer ergo parvulus diversorum animalium turmas minat, quia Redemptor noster, qui multimodas hominum mentes in unanimitate fraterna insolubiliter conflat, dum ad amorem eos patriae coelestis accendit, in hoc eos mundo quasi pedem figere non permittit. Ad Deum vero non itur vestigiis pedum, sed bonorum gradibus operum, nec ad eum quispiam valet ascendere per corporei conatus aditum, sed per assiduum sancti operis incrementum.

Videamus igitur et istos beatos martyres quomodo non potuerint divino flagrantes igne quiescere, sed semper elaboraverunt de bonis ad optima festinare. Nam dum et ante persecutionis articulum tantae jam sanctitatis essent, ut signa per eos Deus et virtutes ostenderet, non isto contenti pertrahuntur ad judicem, et in bello declarant quantam habuerint et in pace virtutem. Et prius quidem antiqui hostis artifex et versuta nequitia per vasculum suum coepit cum eis quasi mitius agere, deinde non valens immobilem eorum ferre constantiam, apposuit in eos crudeliter insanire. Nam carnificibus undique saevientibus, uterque martyr, velut una mens et eadem caro, verberibus caeditur, plagarum caede mactatur, mox carcerali custodiae traditur, ac famis inopia cruciatur. Sed nunquid bellatoribus suis divina protectio defuit, et quod in eis Deus ipse confligeret evidenti prorsus indicio non ostendit? Nam dum eos carnifices verberibus atterunt, eorum brachia, quae in ictus debacchantur, arescunt, ut saxea pectora et a pietatis visceribus aliena, saltem per carnis arefactae rigorem, discant cordis habere mollitiem, et in membrorum suorum nexibus colligant quam timenda sit virtus adversus quam tam furiose, tam atrociter dimicabant.

Jam vero illud quam sublimis gratiae meritum, quantae cognoscitur apud Deum familiaritatis indicium, quod, in carcere constituti et triduana simul inedia macerati, angelitus visitantur et mensae coelestis alimenta percipiunt. In eis quippe Christus esuriebat, in eis supplicia perferebat, cum eis claudebatur in carcere, cum eis in vinculis, cum eis erat comes individuus in tormentis. Et qui dudum inter deambulantes in camino Chaldaico pueros visus est quartus, ipse procul dubio cum istis etiam invictissimis bellatoribus suis factus est tertius.

Who leads those dwelling together, because lest our hearts cling to earthly things, He incessantly inflames the predator of heavenly desire. And this very leading is to enkindle us to His love with the flame of continuous charity; lest when we love each other with a vicarious love, being forgetful of Him to whom we ought to return, we remain in mind in this exile. Therefore the little child leads the troops of diverse animals, because our Redeemer, who insolubly fuses the manifold minds of men in fraternal unanimity, while He enkindles them to the love of the heavenly fatherland, does not permit them in this world as if to fix a foot. For one goes to God not by the footsteps of feet, but by the steps of good works, nor is anyone able to ascend to Him through the approach of corporeal effort, but through the assiduous increment of holy work.

Let us see, therefore, also these blessed martyrs, how they could not rest, being flagrant with divine fire, but always labored to hasten from good things to the best. For while even before the point of persecution they were already of such great sanctity that God showed signs and virtues through them, not content with that, they are drawn before the judge, and in war they declare how much virtue they also had in peace. And first indeed the artisan of the ancient enemy and his versatile wickedness began to act with them as if more mildly through his vessel, then, not being able to bear their immobile constancy, he applied himself to rage cruelly against them. For with the executioners raging on all sides, each martyr, as if one mind and the same flesh, is beaten with stripes, slaughtered by the slaughter of blows, soon is delivered to prison custody, and is tortured by the want of hunger. But was divine protection ever wanting to His warriors, and did it not show by a clearly evident sign that God Himself was fighting in them? For while the executioners were wearing them down with stripes, their arms, which were raving in the blows, withered, so that the stony breasts and those alienated from the bowels of piety might learn, at least through the rigor of the withered flesh, to have the softness of heart, and might collect in the knots of their members how fearful that virtue was against which they were so furiously, so atrociously fighting.

Now indeed, how sublime a merit of grace is that, how great an indication of familiarity with God is it known to be, that, being placed in prison and at the same time macerated by a three-day fast, they are visited by an angel and perceive the nourishments of the heavenly table. For in them Christ was hungry, in them He bore the punishments, with them He was shut in prison, with them in chains, with them He was an individual companion in torments. And He who lately was seen as the fourth among the youths walking in the Chaldean furnace, Himself without doubt was made the third with these most invincible warriors of His.

«Ecce, inquit rex, video viros quatuor solutos deambulantes in medio ignis, et nihil corruptionis est in eis, et species quarti similis est Filio Dei (Dan. III).» Hinc est quod et persecutor ille Tiburtius, insanientis iracundiae felle permotus, vaporantes de fornace furiosi pectoris flammas evomuit, et beatos martyres super ardentes prunas nudis pedibus astare praecepit. At protinus et carbones exstincti, et gloriosi martyrum pedes tanquam super candentia lilia, vel croceos rosarum flores molli sunt vestigio delectati. Nec cessat adhuc ferox nequitiae spiritus. Nihil intentatum relinquit, sed omnia versutae fraudis, omnia rabidi furoris argumenta percurrit. Sed quo pluribus jaculis impetit Christi milites, eo reddit caeca crudelitas clariores. Et quanto frementior eis ingruit immanitas praelii, tanto praebetur uberior occasio triumphandi. Itaque statuitur idolum, et insana judicis rabies imperat adorandum. At dum non idolum, sed Deus omnipotens adoratur, figura larvalis in pulverem redacta collabitur. Postremo qui dedignati sunt suas idolis inclinare cervices, alacriter gladio beata colla subjiciunt, et sic glorioso sanguine purpurati ad Imperatorem suum peracta victoria revertuntur.

O beata germanitas, quae nec in conceptione dividi, nec in nativitate discerni, nec in pretiosae mortis potuit genere separari, pares in poena, coaequales in gloria! Simul ex maternis visceribus funduntur in mundo, simul ex agone consummati certaminis oriuntur in coelo. Quodammodo felicior iste quam Rebeccae dicendus est partus. Nam, Scriptura teste, in utero illius collidebantur parvuli, quia sub diversa morum atque successuum erant qualitate victuri. Unde sibi divinitus dicitur: «Duae gentes in utero tuo sunt, et duo populi ex utero tuo dividentur, populusque populum superabit, et major serviet minori (Gen. XXV).» In istis autem nulla diversitas. quos nimirum et non dispar vita confoederat, et individuae charitatis unanimitas conflat. Felicior etiam iste partus quam fuerit ille Thamar, quo videlicet exorti sunt Phares et Zara (Gen. XXXVIII). Quorum alter divisio, alter oriens interpretatur. Et sicut inter se invicem dissidet interpretatio nominum, ita quaedam diversitas est in operibus singulorum, sed nec idem tenent in figura mysterium. Beati vero martyres isti in suorum nominum interpretatione non discrepant, quia quodammodo unum est quod designant, et nomen utriuslibet utrique concordat. Pergentinus enim et Laurentinus, uterque pergit ad lauream, et quibus una est via, una est concupiscentia; simul gradientes perveniunt ad coronam. Quanquam et in istis, sicut eorum testatur historia, quaedam reperiatur esse differentia.

"Behold," said the king, "I see four men loosed walking in the midst of the fire, and there is no corruption in them, and the appearance of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Dan. 3). Hence it is that even that persecutor Tiburtius, moved by the gall of raging wrath, vomited out the flames of his furious breast steaming from the furnace, and commanded the blessed martyrs to stand with naked feet upon the burning coals. But immediately both the coals were extinguished, and the glorious feet of the martyrs were delighted with a soft step as if upon white lilies or the yellow flowers of roses. Nor does the fierce spirit of wickedness cease yet. It leaves nothing unattempted, but runs through all arguments of versatile fraud, all of rabid fury. But by the more darts it attacks the soldiers of Christ, by so much does blind cruelty render them more illustrious. And by how much more roaring the immensity of the battle rushes upon them, by so much more abundant an occasion of triumphing is provided. Therefore an idol is set up, and the insane rage of the judge commands it to be adored. But while not the idol, but almighty God is adored, the ghostly figure, reduced to dust, collapses. Finally, those who disdained to bow their necks to idols, eagerly submit their blessed necks to the sword, and thus purpled with glorious blood, they return to their Emperor, the victory having been achieved.

O blessed brotherhood, which could not be divided in conception, nor discerned in birth, nor separated in the kind of precious death, equal in punishment, coequal in glory! Together they are poured out into the world from the maternal womb, together they arise in heaven, having been consummated from the agony of the contest. This birth must be called in some way happier than that of Rebecca. For, with Scripture as witness, the little ones were colliding in her womb, because they were to live under a diverse quality of morals and successes. Whence it is said to her divinely: "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples shall be divided from your womb, and people shall overcome people, and the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25). But in these there is no diversity, whom indeed both a not dissimilar life federates, and the unanimity of individual charity fuses. Happier also is this birth than was that of Tamar, from whom indeed Perez and Zerah arose (Gen. 38). Of whom one is interpreted as "division," the other as "rising." And just as the interpretation of the names disagrees between themselves, so there is a certain diversity in the works of each, nor do they hold the same mystery in figure. But these blessed martyrs do not disagree in the interpretation of their names, because in a certain way what they designate is one, and the name of either agrees with both. For Pergentinus and Laurentinus, each proceeds to the laurel, and for whom there is one way, there is one desire; walking together they arrive at the crown. Although also in these, as their history witnesses, a certain difference is found to be.

Nam dum eos violentia pertraheret ad tyrannum, Pergentinus fratri, quoniam eloquentiorem judicabat, respondendi delegavit officium, ut ille velut Aaron loqueretur ad Pharaonem, dum assisterent ante praesidem. Hoc igitur inter hujus beatae germanitatis geminos distat quod inter Moysen et Aaron differre Scriptura commemorat. Quorum unus de se conqueritur, dicens: «Obsecro, Domine, non sum eloquens ab heri et nudius tertius, et ex quo locutus es ad servum tuum, impeditioris et tardioris linguae sum (Exod. IV).» De altero vero dicitur: «Aaron frater tuus Levites, scio quod eloquens sit; ipse loquetur pro te ad populum, et erit os tuum (Ibid.).» Ecce itaque beati martyres in ea re, quia reperiuntur sibimet invicem fuisse dissimiles, quodammodo Moysi et Aaron exstitisse videntur aequales. Et non fortassis incongrue. Sicut enim per illos lex olim data est Israeliticae plebi, ita per istos Christiana fides et Evangelium civibus illuxit Aretii. Nam cum gentilitati adhuc ritus pestilenter inhorresceret et in Christianum nomen persecutionis furor immaniter ebulliret, tunc scilicet quando B. Donatus pretioso sanguine Aretinam purpuravit Ecclesiam, vigesimus tamen imperator est Julianus, sub quo B. Donatus insignis martyr enituit, a Decio principe, cujus persecutio istos gloriosos martyres coronavit. Quod si catalogum quoque Romanorum pontificum studiose percurras, invenies a B. Sixto, cui Decianus furor, dum desaeviret, servire coactus est, usque ad Liberium papam, qui Juliani tempore praefuit duodecim apostolicae sedi praecedisse pontifices.

Cum igitur gloriosi martyres isti tanto tempore B. Donatum praecessisse noscantur, non immerito dicuntur in his regionibus in quibus passi sunt, credentium duces, fidelium principes, ac totius, ut ita loquar, Aretinae Ecclesiae fundatores. Hi profecto nunc micantes gemmae et rutilantes sunt margaritae, quae videlicet in imperatoris aeterni diademate pollucibiliter radiant, et inter ignitos supernae Hierusalem lapides inexstinguibili splendore coruscant. Porro sicut geminum oculorum lumen in capite constitutum subjecta corporis membra condecorat, ita B. Donatus cum duobus his coeli sideribus, quasi sanctitatis caput fideique principium adjacentia quaeque loca praecellit, et, ut ita fatear, totum Tusciae corpus eximii splendoris nitore perfundit. Tanto quippe nunc sunt eminentioris gloriae claritate conspicui, quanto graviori fuerant rabidi persecutoris immanitate depressi. Igitur de poenis ad gloriam, de certamine translati sunt ad coronam. Ipse nimirum eis factus est praemium cum recepit, qui se pro eis obtulerat pretium cum redemit, Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

For while violence dragged them to the tyrant, Pergentinus delegated the office of responding to his brother, because he judged him more eloquent, so that he might speak as Aaron to Pharaoh, while they stood before the governor. This, therefore, differs between the twins of this blessed brotherhood which Scripture commemorates as differing between Moses and Aaron. Of whom one complains of himself, saying: "I beseech thee, Lord, I am not eloquent from yesterday and the day before, and since thou hast spoken to thy servant, I am of a more impeded and slower tongue" (Exod. 4). But of the other it is said: "Aaron thy brother the Levite, I know that he is eloquent; he shall speak for thee to the people, and he shall be thy mouth" (ibid.). Behold therefore the blessed martyrs in that matter, because they are found to have been dissimilar to each other, in a certain way appear to have existed equal to Moses and Aaron. And perhaps not incongruously. For just as through them the law was once given to the Israelite people, so through these the Christian faith and the Gospel shone upon the citizens of Arezzo. For when the rite still bristled pestilently in heathendom and the fury of persecution bubbled up immensely against the Christian name, then indeed when Blessed Donatus purpled the Church of Arezzo with his precious blood, the twentieth emperor however is Julian, under whom Blessed Donatus shone as a distinguished martyr, from the prince Decius, whose persecution crowned these glorious martyrs. But if you also studiously run through the catalogue of Roman pontiffs, you will find that from Blessed Sixtus, whom Decian fury, while it raged, forced to serve, up to Pope Liberius, who presided over the apostolic see in the time of Julian, twelve pontiffs preceded.

Since therefore these glorious martyrs are known to have preceded Blessed Donatus by so much time, they are not undeservedly called the leaders of the believers, the princes of the faithful, and, so to speak, the founders of the entire Church of Arezzo in these regions in which they suffered. These indeed are now glittering gems and ruddy pearls, which radiate splendidly in the diadem of the eternal Emperor, and coruscate with inextinguishable splendor among the fiery stones of the supernal Jerusalem. Furthermore, just as the twin light of the eyes placed in the head adorns the subject members of the body, so Blessed Donatus with these two stars of heaven, as the head of sanctity and the principle of faith, excels all adjacent places, and, as I may so confess, bathes the whole body of Tuscany with the brightness of extraordinary splendor. For they are now as much conspicuous with the clarity of more eminent glory as they had been depressed by the more heavy immensity of the rabid persecutor. Therefore they have been translated from punishments to glory, from the contest to the crown. He himself indeed was made the reward for them when He received them, who had offered Himself as the price for them when He redeemed them, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ages of ages. Amen.

Sermo XXIII.

I. IN NATIVITATE S. JOANNIS BAPTISTAE. (XXIV JUN.)

Hodie, dilectissimi, dies illuxit insignis, tanto caeteris diebus sanctior, quanto sanctiorem hominem terris effudit. In hac siquidem die natus est ille sanctorum splendor, justorum gloria, laetitia angelorum, excellentissimus homo, consanguineus Christi, amicus Sponsi, Sponsae praeparator. Unus est et secundum non habet, qui choris intertextus angelicis, sublimioris coronae titulis universitatis humanae transcendit ascensum. Denique «inter natos mulierum non surrexit major Joanne Baptista (Matth. XI).» Felix homo, qui feliciter coelorum perambulans officinas cursu velocissimo sequitur Redemptorem, nec alicujus intercluditur fastigio dignitatis, quem summae felicitatis immensitas largius irroravit! Laetantur angeli, et utriusque naturae numerositas admiratur hominem sic ingressum abyssum luminis et in aeternae divinitatis pelagus absorptum, ut ipsam reverberet angelicae puritatis originem. Eleventur omnes, et meritorum praerogativis ante consistorium majestatis exsultent; non erit tamen qui ad Baptistae Joannis privilegium audeat aspirare. Age, jam aggrediamur virtutum insignia, quae Deus majestatis in amico suo gloriosa cumulatione signavit; sic enim ab ortu vitae usque ad occasum cum hominibus conversatus est, ut forma vitae morum informatio habeatur. Et licet hic sermonis aurei non rutilet pulchritudo, tentabimus tamen rerum veritatem qualicunque stylo perstringere, illud Sapientis attendentes: Prudentibus viris non placere phalerata, sed fortia (Eccli. IX).

Primus ejus honor est gloria in annuntiatione. Non est dissimulanti silentio transeundum quam solemni glorificatione pueri hujus in hunc mundum nuntiatus ingressus. Adest angelus Gabriel, et a superiori coelorum cardine Domini fortitudo descendens, stat a dextris altaris incensi (Luc. I), nec quilibet angelus, sed ille sublimior, qui beatae Virgini nuntium attulit singulare, et electus est ut nuntiaret militem qui regem nuntiare debebat (Ibid.). Astat sacerdos sacerdotalibus indutus et multiplici vestimentorum varietate, coelestium sacramentorum praefigurans imaginem, purgationem peccatorum mystici sanguinis aspersione praesignat. Consistit coram arca foederis et ante testamenti tabulas, urnam auream habentem manna, virgam Aaron, Cherubim et propitiatorium, solemniter infulatus, vultui Dei, gloriae majestatis, rerum omnium Domino vota percelebrat.

Sermon XXIII.

I. ON THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. (JUNE 24)

Today, most beloved, a distinguished day has dawned, as much holier than other days as it poured forth a holier man onto the lands. For on this day was born that splendor of the saints, the glory of the just, the joy of the angels, the most excellent man, the kinsman of Christ, the friend of the Bridegroom, the preparer of the Bride. He is one and has not a second, who, interwoven with the angelic choirs, transcends the ascent of human universality by the titles of a more sublime crown. Finally, "among those born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matth. 11). Happy man, who happily traversing the workshops of the heavens follows the Redeemer with most swift course, nor is he excluded by the height of any dignity, whom the immensity of the highest happiness has more largely bedewed! The angels rejoice, and the multiplicity of either nature admires the man thus having entered the abyss of light and absorbed into the sea of eternal divinity, so that he reflects the very origin of angelic purity. Let all be elevated, and let them exult by the prerogatives of merits before the consistory of majesty; there will not be any, however, who would dare to aspire to the privilege of John the Baptist. Come, now let us approach the insignia of virtues, which the God of majesty has signed in His friend with a glorious accumulation; for he thus conversed with men from the rising of life even to its setting, that his form of life may be held as an information of morals. And although here the beauty of golden speech does not glow, we will nevertheless attempt to touch upon the truth of things with whatever style, attending to that of the Wise Man: that to prudent men feathered things do not please, but strong things (Eccli. 9).

His first honor is glory in the annunciation. It must not be passed over with a dissembling silence how solemn was the glorification of this child announced at his entry into this world. The angel Gabriel is present, and the strength of the Lord descending from the superior hinge of the heavens, stands at the right of the altar of incense (Luke 1), nor any angel whatever, but that more sublime one, who brought the singular message to the blessed Virgin, and was chosen that he might announce the soldier who was to announce the King (ibid.). The priest stands clothed in sacerdotal things and with a manifold variety of garments, prefiguring the image of heavenly sacraments, he presignifies the purgation of sins by the aspersion of mystic blood. He consists before the ark of the covenant and before the tables of the testament, having a golden urn containing manna, the rod of Aaron, Cherubim and the propitiatory, solemnly infulated, he celebrates vows before the face of God, the gloria of majesty, the Lord of all things.

Dies instat solemnis, et caeteris diebus multitudini Judaeorum celebrior, Domini praecipientis attestatione sublimis, plane spectabilis et festiva, in qua sola soli pontifici licebat introire in Sancta sanctorum, et aspergine multiformi summae divinitatis iram refrigerare. Convenitur undique in sanctam civitatem, et populorum turba frequentior cumulat materiam gaudiorum. Inter haec sacra consistens archangelus: «Ne timeas, inquit, Zacharia (Ibid.),» quia nascetur tibi filius parentum gaudium, nobilitas generis, orbis exemplum, finis legis, Evangelii principium, mortis expulsio, janua vitae, decus hominum, conversationis splendor, omnis justitiae principatus. Et ne diffusiore tractatu rerum excellentiam confundamus, nascentis et conversantis integritas in libris evangelicis plenius assignatur.

Considera nuntiantis sublimitatem, dignitatem loci, diei reverentiam, et tunc intelligere poteris quam superexcellenti gloria Joannis Baptistae genitura praedicitur. Salva igitur reverentia Redemptoris, quia non derogamus Regi, si Regis militem honoramus, cum ille Dominus, hic servus; ille Creator, creatura iste; digniore praemonstratione Joannes nuntiatur quam Christus. Christus fortassis in thalamo, Joannes in templo; et non solum in templo, sed etiam ante Sancta sanctorum in insigni die solemnitatis eorum. Joannes ab eodem archangelo, in loco digniore, tempore sacratiore, apertiore miraculo praedicatur. Recole Isaac ab angelis nuntiatum (Gen. XVIII), Samsonem per angelum praedicatum (Jud. XIII), et universam Nazaraeorum sectam circumspice, solumque Baptistam tam in hoc quam in aliis invenies digniorem.

Secundus honor est sanctificatio in ventre matris. Quicunque de massa praevaricatrice mundum ingredimur, longam restem originalis peccati trahimus nobiscum. Solus ille qui peccatum non fecit (I Petr. II) excipitur, quem Virginalis thalamus ignorante viro terris effudit; longe quippe aliter et dissimili modo conceptus est, Spiritu sancto tota majestate Virginem inundante atque mundante, superans usum carnis, naturae ordinem, viri commistionem. Sic quippe decebat, ut peccatum nesciret qui peccata tollebat, ut similitudinem carnis peccati susciperet, non autem carnem peccati.

The solemn day is at hand, and more celebrated than other days to the multitude of the Jews, sublime by the attestation of the Lord commanding, plainly spectacular and festive, in which alone it was permitted to the pontiff alone to enter into the Holy of Holies, and with a multiform aspersion to refresh the wrath of the supreme divinity. There is a gathering from everywhere into the holy city, and the more frequent crowd of peoples accumulates the matter of joys. Standing among these sacred things the archangel says: "Fear not, Zechariah" (ibid.), because there shall be born to you a son, the joy of parents, the nobility of the race, an example to the world, the end of the law, the beginning of the Gospel, the expulsion of death, the gate of life, the beauty of men, the splendor of conversation, the princedom of all justice. And lest we confound the excellence of things with a more diffuse treatise, the integrity of his birth and conversation is more fully assigned in the evangelical books.

Consider the sublimity of the one announcing, the dignity of the place, the reverence of the day, and then you will be able to understand with how superexcellent glory the birth of John the Baptist is predicted. Saving therefore the reverence of the Redeemer, because we do not derogate from the King if we honor the King's soldier, since He is the Lord, he the servant; He the Creator, he a creature; John is announced with a more worthy premonstration than Christ. Christ perhaps in a chamber, John in the temple; and not only in the temple, but even before the Holy of Holies on the distinguished day of their solemnity. John is preached by the same archangel, in a more worthy place, at a more sacred time, by a more open miracle. Recall Isaac announced by angels (Gen. 18), Samson preached through an angel (Judges 13), and look around at the entire sect of the Nazirites, and you will find only the Baptist more worthy both in this and in other things.

The second honor is sanctification in the mother's womb. Whoever of us enters the world from the prevaricating mass, we draw with us the long rope of original sin. He alone who did no sin (1 Peter 2) is excepted, whom the Virginal chamber, ignorant of man, poured forth to the lands; for He was conceived far otherwise and in a dissimilar way, with the Holy Spirit inundating and cleansing the Virgin with all majesty, surpassing the use of the flesh, the order of nature, the commingling of man. For thus it was fitting, that He who took away sins should not know sin, that He should assume the likeness of the flesh of sin, but not the flesh of sin.

Cum igitur omnes in iniquitatibus concepti sint (Psal. L), neminem unquam mortalium intra materna viscera sanctificatum legimus, praeter Jeremiam et Joannem Baptistam; quanquam et de singulari Virgine nulla sit ambiguitas, quin ipsa maternis circumsepta visceribus, sublimiore sanctificationis genere mundata sit, utpote sacrarium illud, in quo Deus, Dei Filius, carnem fuerat suscepturus. Sed longe minor Jeremiae sanctificatio, quam Joannis. Ille quidem in matris utero sanctificatus, hic Spiritu sancto repletus fuisse cognoscitur. Multo quippe excellentius est Spiritu sancto repleri quam sanctificari; ibi enim sanctificatio emundationem, hic repletio inundationem significat. Denique et apostoli, qui manibus suis tractaverunt de Verbo vitae (I Joan. I), cum Spiritum sanctum de Salvatoris accepissent afflatu (Joan. XX), vix quinquagesimo a resurrectionis die ad illum gradum pervenire potuerunt ut diceretur de eis: «Repleti sunt omnes Spiritu sancto (Act. II).» Et licet Spiritus sanctus largiore tunc munere credentium corda repleverit, hoc tamen Joannes in utero legitur assecutus, quod apostolica celsitudo tandem largiore promissione meruit obtinere.

Attende, obsecro, diligenter, quam ordinata dispositione Spiritus ille multiplex Jeremiam sanctificat, implet Joannem, supervenit in Mariam. And Jeremiae quidem admiranda sanctificatio, quia etsi in peccato conceptus est, nascitur tamen sine peccato. Antequam enim exiret de ventre sanctificatus est, nec poterat nasci non sanctus, qui in matris utero erat sanctificatus. Mira res, et a retro transactis saeculis inaudita, hominem conceptum in peccatis, nasci sine peccato. Joannem vero longe gloriosior virtus implevit, qui et sanctificatus est a peccato, ita et dominante Spiritu superfusus, ut et purgatus exeat et repletus. Vere magnus coram Domino, quem angelus nuntiat, sanctificat Deus, sanctus replet Spiritus, vita commendat. Ineffabiliore autem modo supervenit in Virginem, quam tota divinitatis plenitudo sine mensurae discretione perfudit, ut totam caperet, qui fecit totum; ut non solum a peccatis abluta, repleta Spiritu, sed et de Spiritu sancto concepisse credatur, quia «quod in ea natum est, de Spiritu sancto est (Matth. I).» Inde est quod singulari praerogativa fides catholica Filium Dei natum de Virgine, conceptum de Spiritu confitetur; ut deitatis et humanitatis indivisibilis adunata connexio, vocabulorum indifferentia designetur. Vides ergo quam remotiore privilegio «speciosus forma prae filiis hominum (Psal. XLIV),» a filiis hominum in concipiendo discretus sit? Illi etenim de peccatis et in peccatis concepti sunt; hic in Spiritu, et de Spiritu sancto concipitur. Haec sane dicta sunt de conceptione Joannis, nihil praejudicantia sanius sapienti.

Since therefore all have been conceived in iniquities (Psalm 50), we read of no one of mortals ever having been sanctified within the maternal bowels, except Jeremiah and John the Baptist; although concerning the singular Virgin there is no ambiguity, but that she, surrounded by the maternal bowels, was cleansed by a more sublime kind of sanctification, as that sanctuary in which God, the Son of God, was to assume flesh. But far less was the sanctification of Jeremiah than that of John. That one indeed was sanctified in the mother's womb, this one is known to have been filled with the Holy Spirit. For it is much more excellent to be filled with the Holy Spirit than to be sanctified; for there sanctification signifies a cleansing, here filling signifies an inundation. Finally also the apostles, who handled with their hands of the Word of life (1 John 1), when they had received the Holy Spirit from the breathing of the Savior (John 20), could scarcely on the fiftieth day from the day of resurrection arrive at that degree that it might be said of them: "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2). And although the Holy Spirit then filled the hearts of the believers with a larger gift, this however John is read to have attained in the womb, which the apostolic height at length merited to obtain by a larger promise.

Attend, I beseech you, diligently, with how ordered a disposition that manifold Spirit sanctifies Jeremiah, fills John, comes upon Mary. And indeed the sanctification of Jeremiah is admirable, because even if he was conceived in sin, he is nevertheless born without sin. For before he went out from the womb he was sanctified, nor could he be born not holy, who in the mother's womb had been sanctified. A wondrous thing, and unheard of from the ages past, a man conceived in sins to be born without sin. But a far more glorious virtue filled John, who was both sanctified from sin, and thus superfused by the dominating Spirit, that he might both go out purged and filled. Truly great before the Lord, whom an angel announces, God sanctifies, the Holy Spirit fills, life commends. But in an ineffable way He came upon the Virgin, whom the whole fullness of the divinity without discretion of measure perfused, so that He might take the whole, who made the whole; so that she is believed not only to have been washed from sins, filled with the Spirit, but also to have conceived from the Holy Spirit, because "that which is born in her, is from the Holy Spirit" (Matth. 1). Hence it is that with a singular prerogative the Catholic faith confesses the Son of God born of the Virgin, conceived from the Spirit; so that the adjoined connection of the indivisible deity and humanity may be designated by the indifference of the names. Do you see therefore with how more remote a privilege He who is "beautiful in form before the sons of men" (Psalm 44), was discerned from the sons of men in conceiving? For those were conceived of sins and in sins; this one is conceived in the Spirit, and from the Holy Spirit. These things indeed are said concerning the conception of John, prejudicing nothing to one who tastes more soundly.

Sed etsi in aliquo sanctorum auctoritatibus videntur obviare, volumus ut sine omni excusationum vel defensionum patrocinio subruantur.

Tertius est excellentia in exsultatione. A saeculo non est auditum quod exsultaverit quis in utero matris, cum hic in gaudio exsultasse legatur. Prorsus obstupenda dignatio, puerum vix conceptum in motum exsultationis erumpere, eique gratanter occurrere servitio dulciore quem virginali substantiae praesensit infusum. Beata anima, quae in via peccatorum non stetit, sed secretiore semita de coelestibus officinis egrediens, inauditae gratulationis est sortita dulcedinem. Felix Elisabeth, ad quam mater properat Redemptoris, quam salutatoriis obsequiis coelorum imperatrix alloquitur. Sed puer multo felicior, qui salutantis majestatem agnoscens, intra viscerum tenebrosa volumina gaudio gautlet, quia vim tam beatae salutationis attendit. «Et factum est, inquit, ut audivit salutationem Mariae Elisabeth, exsultavit in gaudio infans in utero ejus (Luc. I).» Ascendit Virgo cum festinatione in domum Zachariae ad salutandam Elisabeth, portans in utero Filium Dei, Regem gloriae, Dominum majestatis. Occurrit Elisabeth, et antiquae sterilitatis carens opprobriis, amicum Sponsi, praeconem Verbi felicissimo ventre deportat. Junguntur amplexus, venitur ad oscula, copulantur felices uteri, Regemque et militem nonnisi duo tenerrimi parietes abjungunt. Quid mirum, si miratur et exsultat puer ad tactum tam proximae divinitatis afflatus? Poteratne vacare a quocunque miraculo cui praesens aderat Regis praesentia, regnantis Mater, mundi Redemptor? Quid quod non semel tam sanctorum amplexuum fuit celebrata conjunctio? «Mansit autem Maria cum illa quasi mensibus tribus,» ait evangelista (Ibid.). Tanto tempore manet cum Elisabeth virginalis integritas, et nunc dulciore colloquio, nunc amplexu feliciore Joannem puerum consecrat et insignit. Et fortassis usque in diem nativitatis ejus gloriosa Virgo cum cognata sua morata est, donec puerum natum sinu beatissimo confoveret, et uno pariete remoto, propinquiorem redderet praesentiae Creatoris. Facile autem hoc ex Evangelio conjectare liquet, quia jam sex menses a conceptione Joannis defluxerant, cum ad Virginem archangelus missus est, qui renovationem mundi pudori virgineo nova salutatione portavit.

But even if in anything they seem to meet with the authorities of the saints, we wish that they be undermined without any patronage of excuses or defenses.

The third is excellence in exultation. From the beginning of the world it has not been heard that anyone exulted in the mother's womb, when here he is read to have exulted in joy. A thoroughly astounding condescension, for a child scarcely conceived to break out into the movement of exultation, and to meet Him gratefully with a sweeter service whom he sensed infused into the virginal substance. Blessed soul, which did not stand in the way of sinners, but departing from the heavenly workshops by a more secret path, was allotted the sweetness of an unheard-of gratulation. Happy Elizabeth, to whom the mother of the Redeemer hastens, whom the empress of the heavens addresses with salutatory obsequies. But much happier is the child, who, recognizing the majesty of the one saluting, rejoices with joy within the dark volumes of the bowels, because he attends to the force of so blessed a salutation. "And it came to pass," it says, "as Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant exulted in joy in her womb" (Luke 1). The Virgin ascends with haste into the house of Zechariah to salute Elizabeth, bearing in her womb the Son of God, the King of glory, the Lord of majesty. Elizabeth meets her, and lacking the reproaches of her ancient sterility, she carries in her most happy womb the friend of the Bridegroom, the herald of the Word. Embraces are joined, they come to kisses, the happy wombs are coupled, and only two most tender walls separate the King and the soldier. What wonder, if the child wonders and exults at the touch of so near a breath of divinity? Could he be void of any miracle to whom the presence of the King was present, the Mother of the one reigning, the Redeemer of the world? What about the fact that the conjunction of such holy embraces was celebrated not only once? "And Mary remained with her about three months," says the evangelist (ibid.). For so much time the virginal integrity remains with Elizabeth, and now with a sweeter colloquy, now with a happier embrace, she consecrates and distinguishes the child John. And perhaps even unto the day of his birth the glorious Virgin stayed with her kinswoman, until she might cherish the born child in her most blessed bosom, and with one wall removed, might render him nearer to the presence of the Creator. Moreover, it is easy to conjecture this from the Gospel, because already six months from the conception of John had flowed away when the archangel was sent to the Virgin, who brought the renovation of the world to virginal modesty with a new salutation.

Ex hinc Virgo festinat ad Elisabeth, et tribus mensibus praesentia sua cognatae dignatur hospitium, donec noni mensis fine concluso, nativitas imminet patriarchae. Alii, qui librum justorum diligentioribus oculis inspexerunt, ibi se vidisse testantur, quod ipsa Dei genitrix felicem puerum primum de terra levarit, et cognatae partum omni prosecuta sit servitute. Quocunque autem modo rei hujus veritas decernatur, illud pro certo certum est, quia non parum contulit puero nascituro tam felix et morosum intemeratae genitricis hospitium.

Quartus vero gaudium in nativitate. Erubesce, Lucifer, qui mane oriebaris (Isa. XIV), et conatuum fractis impulsibus tandem intellige quia in novissimo dierum tanquam perdix stultissimus remanebis. Machinationibus tuis factum est ut humani generis universitas in peccatis conciperetur, nasceretur in tristitia (Gen. III). Sed ecce iste in utero sanctificatur, oritur in gaudio, laetitiamque mundo sua nativitate refundit. Ecce genus armaturae quod tibi constitueras ad victoriam, Joanni nascitur ad coronam. Apprehende arma et scutum, et toto malignitatis tuae spiritu debacchare, non tamen poteris irrumpere Joannis privilegium, quod benigna scribentis manus proprio charactere consignavit. Multum deceptus, multum delusus es. An ignoras quia tibi vir bellator ab adolescentia et etiam a matris utero consurgit? Nescis quia a diebus istius «regnum coelorum vim patitur, et violenti rapiunt illud? (Matth. XI.)» An oblitus es quia iste mittitur parare Domino plebem perfectam? (Luc. I.) Intuere ordinem rerum, et ab ipsis suae conceptionis initiis invenies hunc validiore conamine tuam fortitudinem irrupisse. Tu fecisti ut fratricida Cain, qui prius natus est (Gen. IV), pollutus et obvolutus exiret, et originalis peccati respergeretur infamia. Hunc excepit orbis exterritus, et humani generis subsecuta nativitas ad infinitae tristitiae cumulum transmigravit. Nativitas autem hominis istius in gaudio est et in solemnitatem praeclaram. Laetatur orbis, et quatuor mundi climata circumsonant gloriosae festivitatis instantia, ipsis etiam coelis celebris et famosa. «Quis putas puer iste erit?» Amicus Sponsi, inimicus tibi, tua potestate potentior. Considerandum est quanta dignitate praepolleat nativitatis hujus celebranda devotio, quantamque gratiam in oculis Ecclesiae potuerit invenire. Nullius hominis nativitatem, praeter solius Dei ejusque matris, in auctoritatis arcem recepit Ecclesia, hujus istius exceptione servata. Novit enim quia melior est dies mortis die nativitatis (Eccle. VII), et quod ortus hominum tristitia comitetur.

From this the Virgin hastens to Elizabeth, and for three months deigns the hospitality of her kinswoman with her presence, until, the end of the ninth month being concluded, the birth of the patriarch is imminent. Others, who have inspected the book of the just with more diligent eyes, testify that they saw there that the mother of God herself first raised the happy child from the earth, and followed the birth of her kinswoman with all service. In whatever way, however, the truth of this matter may be decreed, that for certain is certain, because so happy and lingering a hospitality of the unviolated mother contributed not a little to the child to be born.

The fourth indeed is joy in birth. Blush, Lucifer, who rose in the morning (Isa. 14), and with the broken impulses of your efforts understand at length that in the last of days you will remain as the most foolish partridge. By your machinations it was done that the universality of the human race was conceived in sins, was born in sadness (Gen. 3). But behold, this one is sanctified in the womb, arises in joy, and pours back gladness to the world by his birth. Behold the kind of armor which you had constituted for yourself for victory, is born for John for a crown. Take up the arms and the shield, and rave with the whole spirit of your malignity, yet you will not be able to break into the privilege of John, which the benign hand of the writer signed with its own character. You are much deceived, much deluded. Or are you ignorant that a warrior man rises up against you from adolescence and even from the mother's womb? Do you not know that from the days of this one "the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent bear it away?" (Matth. 11). Or have you forgotten that this one is sent to prepare for the Lord a perfect people? (Luke 1). Gaze upon the order of things, and from the very beginnings of his conception you will find that he broke into your strength with a more valid effort. You made it so that the fratricide Cain, who was born first (Gen. 4), went out polluted and enveloped, and was besprinkled with the infamy of original sin. The terrified world received him, and the followed birth of the human race transmigrated to the heap of infinite sadness. But the birth of this man is in joy and in a distinguished solemnity. The world rejoices, and the four climates of the world resound with the instance of the glorious festivity, celebrated and famous even to the heavens themselves. "Who do you think this child shall be?" The friend of the Bridegroom, an enemy to you, more powerful than your power. It must be considered with how great dignity the celebrated devotion of this birth excels, and how great grace it could find in the eyes of the Church. The birth of no man, except only of God and His mother, has the Church received into the citadel of authority, the exception of this one being preserved. For she knows that the day of death is better than the day of birth (Eccl. 7), and that the rising of men is accompanied by sadness.

Inde est quod martyrum mortes, non nativitates solemnizat Ecclesia; mortem eorum Natalitiorum nomine nominans, quibus factus est de morte natalis. Tunc enim incoeperunt nasci ad vitam, cum vitam deposuerunt pro vita. Hujus vero nativitatem sponsa Christi tanto securius benevolentissima dignatione suscepit, quanto singularius eam veritatis evangelicae irrefragabilis commendat auctoritas.

Quintus est singularitas in conversione et conversatione intra teneritudinem annorum. Beatus namque iste puer ad eremum, spiritu ducente, deductus est; nec obstitit aetatis infirmitas, quam majestas Domini fecundabat. Spiritus enim sanctus non attendit differentiam sexuum, fragilitatem corporum, temporum annositatem, sed quemcunque et quomodo vult dignantissima replet benignitate. Relinquit Joannes mundum, homines fugit, nescit patriam, parentes aspernatur, et in solius divinitatis apicem beatae contemplationis figit obtutus. Mira rerum conversio, hominem vix mundum ingressum mundi fugere gloriam, et saeculi cupiditates non solum oblivisci, sed et nescire, perpetuumque cum divinitate stabilire consortium. Recessus montium, silvarum anfractus et vallium subterjacens vastitas puero patriarchae domicilia praebuerunt. Non opponatur mihi Jeremias, nec praedicantis pueritiae virtus audeat obviare, quia si ille consecratur in prophetam (Jer. I) hic in plusquam prophetam (Matth. XI); et licet ille populo futura praedicat, non tamen conversationis humanae declinat aspectus. Sic, sic Joannes aetatis supergressus infantiam, et nobilioris generis generositatem oblitus, soli vacat divinitati, forma vitae, monachorum propositum, anachoretarum principium, totius religionis assertio. Et haec quidem pro conversione. Porro quanta sublimitas in conversatione fuerit, non est currentis linguae voluptatibus disserendum, sed evangelicae dignitatis comprobandum eloquio. «Joannes, inquit, habebat vestimentum de pilis camelorum, et zonam pelliceam circa lumbos ejus; esca autem ejus erat locustae et mel silvestre (Matth. III). Ecce qui mollibus vestiuntur in domibus regum sunt (Matth. XI).» Rigida vestis, et durissimis hispiditatibus circumtexta, rigore squalorifero corpus afficit patriarchae, carnemque tenerrimam immatura disciplinae feritate coarctat, teneros artus, et sacratiore spiritu superfusos continui quassat longitudo martyrii. Cibus autem ejus qualis erat? Non quaeruntur phasides aves, nec per totam discurritur regionem, ut patriarchalis stomachus impleatur. Sed «erat, inquit, esca ejus locustae, et mel silvestre.»

Hence it is that the Church solemnizes the deaths of the martyrs, not their births; naming their death by the name of Birthdays, by which a birthday was made from death. For then they began to be born to life, when they laid down life for life. But the spouse of Christ received the birth of this one with so much more secure and most benevolent condescension, as the irrefragable authority of evangelical truth singularly commends it.

The fifth is singularity in conversion and conversation within the tenderness of years. For this blessed boy was led to the desert, the Spirit leading; nor did the infirmity of age withstand, which the majesty of the Lord made fecund. For the Holy Spirit does not attend to the difference of sexes, the fragility of bodies, the age of times, but fills whomsoever and howsoever He wills with most deigning benignity. John leaves the world, flees men, knows not the fatherland, spurns parents, and fixes the gaze of blessed contemplation on the peak of the divinity alone. A wondrous conversion of things, for a man scarcely entered the world to flee the glory of the world, and not only to forget the desires of the age, but even not to know them, and to establish a perpetual consortium with the divinity. The recesses of the mountains, the windings of the forests, and the underlying vastness of the valleys provided dwellings for the boy patriarch. Let not Jeremiah be opposed to me, nor let the virtue of his preaching boyhood dare to meet it, because if that one is consecrated as a prophet (Jer. 1) this one is more than a prophet (Matth. 11); and although that one preached future things to the people, he did not however decline the sight of human conversation. Thus, thus John, having overstepped the infancy of age, and forgetful of the generosity of a nobler race, is vacant for the divinity alone, the form of life, the purpose of monks, the principle of anchorites, the assertion of all religion. And these things indeed are for the conversion. Moreover, how great the sublimity in conversation was, is not to be discussed with the delights of a running tongue, but to be proved by the eloquence of evangelical dignity. "John," it says, "had a garment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; but his food was locusts and wild honey (Matth. 3). Behold they who are clothed in soft things are in the houses of kings (Matth. 11)." A rigid garment, and interwoven with the hardest bristlings, affects the body of the patriarch with a squalor-bearing rigor, and coarcts the most tender flesh with an immature ferocity of discipline, the longitude of continuous martyrdom shakes the tender limbs, superfused with a more sacred spirit. Moreover, what kind was his food? Phasian birds are not sought, nor is it run through the whole region, so that the patriarchal stomach may be filled. But "his food was," it says, "locusts and wild honey."

Coeli rore pascitur et animalis vilissimi satiatur edulio, nihilque coctum accipit jejunantis austeritas. Castigato quippe ventri, et diuturna maceratione distento, ignota fuit varietas ferculorum, nec introivit in os ejus quod gulam alliceret, sufficeret ventri, stomacho blandiretur. Elias comedit carnes (III Reg. XVII), et si quid aliud apponitur, cum gratiarum percepit actione, nec aliquem, nisi fallor, legimus in veteri officina ad legis hujus aspirasse fastigium. Vestis aspera, cibus tenuis, mens devota, perfectum consecrant patriarcham.

Sextus est novitas in praedicatione. Hic volo attentius attendat intentio vestra, quia paulo subtilius ordiendum materiae praecipit magnitudo. Post peccatum Adae et illius diluvii vastationem solemnem, electa est justorum infinita pluralitas, cum quibus Deus facie ad faciem locutus fuisse dignoscitur. Transfertur Henoch (Gen. V), eligitur Noe (Gen. VI), vocatur Abraham (Gen. XII), Isaac diligitur (Gen. XVII), Jacob Deum facie ad faciem contemplatur (Gen. XXXIII), Joseph vocatur mundi Salvator (Gen. XLI); nec tamen Dei ad illos, vel illorum ad homines fit aliqua mentio de regni coelestis perpetua mansione. Moyses assumitur in ducem populi Judaeorum (Exod. III), Pharaoni in Deum constituitur. Facit Deus in Aegypto magnalia, et mirabilia in terra Cham, terribilia in mari Rubro (Exod. VII, VIII, etc.). Ascendit Moyses ad caliginem, in qua erat Deus. Datur in monte multiplex praeceptorum auctoritas. Loquitur ille cum Deo, quasi homo ad vicinum suum. Non est occultatum a Moyse quod facit Dominus in occulto, et gloriosum nomen Adonai, quod omnibus obvelatum fuerat, revelatur (Exod. IV, etc.). Sed in his omnibus regni coelorum memoria nec nominatur, nec auditur. Astat Aaron summus sacerdos, potentis virgae gestarius, unctus et delibutus coelestium sacramentorum unctione. Succedit Josue, et omnis illa judicum multitudo, nec est vel ulla tenuis mentio Regni coelestis (Jos., lib.). Invenit Dominus David virum secundum cor suum (Psal. LXXXVIII), Salomonem filium ejus sapientia cumulat singulari (III Reg. III), et omnem illum prophetalem chorum Spiritus sanctus ordinat et infundit, nihilque de coelestis regni gloria prophetatur. Claudit Elias coelum annis tribus et mensibus sex (III Reg. XVII); Eliseus mortuus mortuum vitae restituit (IV Reg. IV); et ab his nec vel ulla scintillula beatae mansionis elucet. Quid plura? A principio mundi usque ad Joannem universitatis humanae electionem recollige, nec in sermone vel opere illius sanctuarii poteris reperire dulcedinem.

He is fed by the dew of heaven and is satiated by the eating of a most vile animal, and the austerity of the fasting one receives nothing cooked. Indeed, to the chastened belly, and distended by long-lasting maceration, the variety of dishes was unknown, nor did that enter into his mouth which might allure the throat, suffice for the belly, flatter the stomach. Elijah ate flesh (3 Kings 17), and if anything else is served, he perceived it with the action of graces, nor do we read of anyone, unless I am deceived, in the ancient workshop to have aspired to the height of this law. A rough garment, thin food, a devoted mind, consecrate a perfect patriarch.

The sixth is novelty in preaching. Here I wish your attention to attend more closely, because the magnitude of the matter commands a slightly more subtle beginning. After the sin of Adam and the solemn devastation of that flood, an infinite plurality of the just was chosen, with whom God is recognized to have spoken face to face. Enoch is translated (Gen. 5), Noah is chosen (Gen. 6), Abraham is called (Gen. 12), Isaac is loved (Gen. 17), Jacob contemplates God face to face (Gen. 33), Joseph is called the Savior of the world (Gen. 41); yet no mention is made by God to them, or by them to men, concerning the perpetual mansion of the heavenly kingdom. Moses is assumed as leader of the people of the Jews (Exod. 3), he is constituted as a God to Pharaoh. God does great things in Egypt, and wonders in the land of Ham, terrible things in the Red Sea (Exod. 7, 8, etc.). Moses ascends to the darkness in which God was. A manifold authority of precepts is given on the mountain. He speaks with God as a man to his neighbor. That which the Lord does in secret is not hidden from Moses, and the glorious name Adonai, which had been veiled from all, is revealed (Exod. 4, etc.). But in all these the memory of the kingdom of heaven is neither named nor heard. Aaron the high priest stands, the bearer of the powerful rod, anointed and besmeared with the unction of heavenly sacraments. Joshua succeeds, and all that multitude of judges, nor is there even any thin mention of the heavenly Kingdom (Jos., lib.). The Lord found David a man after His own heart (Psalm 88), He heaps up singular wisdom upon Solomon his son (3 Kings 3), and the Holy Spirit orders and infuses all that prophetic choir, and nothing is prophesied concerning the glory of the heavenly kingdom. Elijah shuts the heaven for three years and six months (3 Kings 17); Elisha dead restores a dead man to life (4 Kings 4); and from these not even any spark of the blessed mansion shines forth. Why more? From the beginning of the world even to John, recollect the election of human universality, and you will not be able to find the sweetness of that sanctuary in the speech or work of any.

Veni ergo ad Joannem, et audi vocem exsultationis, vocem novitatis, vocem laetitiae, misericordiae verbum, sermonem gloriae, gratiae largitatem; quod celaverat Deus, tacuerat angelus, latuerat patriarchas, prophetae nescierant: «Poenitentiam, inquit, agite; appropinquabit enim regnum coelorum (Matth. III).» Verbum poenitentiae dulce, et gloriosum verbum regni coelorum laetum et adorandum, illi soli primario conveniens qui primus Novi Testamenti posuit fundamenta. Haec est illa vox, de qua maximus ille contemplator coelestium visionum in haec verba prosequitur: «Et vox prima quam audivi, tanquam citharoedorum citharizantium in citharis suis (Apoc. XIV).» A diebus Adae usque ad Joannem organum nostrum versum est in vocem flentium, quia ibi peccatorum frequentia, nec poenitentiae locus, duplex erat deplorandi materia. Occidis? occidi juberis. Sabbato ligna colligis? lapidari juberis (Num. XV), et ille, cui proprium est misereri semper et parcere, nisi ferire non novit. Dederat quippe eis praecepta non bona traditor praeceptorum, et justificationes in quibus vivere non possent (Ezech. XX). Hoc est quod justus miratur dicens: «Ubi misericordiae tuae antiquae, Domine?» (Psal. LXXXVIII.) Joannes natus ostendit medicamentum vulneri, peccato poenitentiam, veniam iniquitati. Haec est prima vox quam vox clamantis in deserto (Matth. III) proposuit: «Et vox turturis audita est in terra nostra (Cant. II).» Ex tunc misit in os nostrum canticum novum, carmen Deo nostro (Psal. XXXIX), et resonat in ore nostro gratiarum actio, et vox laudis; superexaltatur misericordia judicio, peccatoribus parcitur, regnat pietas, justitia dissimulatur, et miserendi, non feriendi, quaerit occasionem misericors et miserator Dominus. Citharizant ergo in citharis suis, qui voluptatum effusionem poenitentiae districtione reverberant: et de profunda peccatorum voragine respirantes, Pharaone submerso, cantant in viis Domini, «quoniam magna est gloria Domini (Psal. CXXXVII).»

Septimus est dignitas in baptismate. Singularis prorsus humilitas, Verbum caro factum, et in perfectum egrediens virum, relicta hominum universitate, Joannem quaerit, Joannem desiderat, ad Joannem vadit. Terribilis in consiliis Deus super filios hominum (Psal. LXV), portansque omnia verbo virtutis suae, purgationem peccatorum faciens (Hebr. I), venit a Galilaea in Jordanem ad Joannem, ut baptizaretur ab eo. Stupet Joannes et timore concutitur, totumque patriarcham infinitus horror insumit. «Ego inquit, a te debeo baptizari, et tu venis ad me? (Matth. III.)»

Come therefore to John, and hear the voice of exultation, the voice of novelty, the voice of joy, the word of mercy, the speech of glory, the largesse of grace; what God had concealed, the angel had been silent about, had been hidden from the patriarchs, the prophets had not known: "Do penance," he said; "for the kingdom of heaven will approach" (Matth. 3). The sweet word of penance, and the joyful and adorable glorious word of the kingdom of heaven, fitting for him alone primarily who first laid the foundations of the New Testament. This is that voice, concerning which that greatest contemplator of heavenly visions proceeds in these words: "And the first voice which I heard, as of harpers harping on their harps" (Apoc. 14). From the days of Adam even to John our organ was turned into the voice of those weeping, because there the frequency of sins, nor a place for penance, was a double matter for deploring. Do you kill? you are commanded to be killed. Do you gather wood on the Sabbath? you are commanded to be stoned (Num. 15), and He, to whom it is proper always to have mercy and to spare, knew only how to strike. For the betrayer of the precepts had given them precepts not good, and justifications in which they could not live (Ezech. 20). This is what the just man wonders at saying: "Where are thy ancient mercies, O Lord?" (Psalm 88.) John being born showed the medicine for the wound, penance for sin, pardon for iniquity. This is the first voice which the voice of one crying in the desert (Matth. 3) proposed: "And the voice of the turtle has been heard in our land" (Cant. 2). From then He sent into our mouth a new canticle, a song to our God (Psalm 39), and there resounds in our mouth the action of graces, and the voice of praise; mercy is superexalted over judgment, sinners are spared, piety reigns, justice is dissembled, and the merciful and compassionate Lord seeks an occasion of having mercy, not of striking. Therefore they harp on their harps, who reverberate the effusion of pleasures with the strictness of penance: and breathing again from the deep abyss of sins, with Pharaoh submerged, they sing in the ways of the Lord, "for great is the glory of the Lord" (Psalm 137).

The seventh is dignity in baptism. A thoroughly singular humility, the Word made flesh, and going out into a perfect man, having left the universality of men, seeks John, desires John, goes to John. God terrible in counsels over the sons of men (Psalm 65), and bearing all things by the word of His power, making purgation of sins (Hebr. 1), came from Galilee into the Jordan to John, that He might be baptized by him. John is stupified and is shaken with fear, and an infinite horror consumes the whole patriarch. "I," he said, "ought to be baptized by thee, and comest thou to me? (Matth. 3.)"

Dicit et Salvator: «Sine modo; sic enim decet nos implere omnem justitiam (Ibid.).» Acquiescitur utrinque salutaribus monitis, et accingit se Joannes ad baptizandum et ad suspiciendum Dominum angelorum. Ex uitur vestimentis suis Rex gloriae, splendor luminis, et figura substantiae Dei, Joannis manibus attrectatur. Caro illa sumpta de Virgine, candidioreque derivata materia, nudatur in flumine, felicibus Baptistae manibus infundenda. Descendunt angeli; et coelorum agmina tota reverentia currunt ad Creatorem, baptizantemque et baptizatum dominantia numina circumcingunt. Infundit aquam capiti Creatoris creatura nobilior, et Dei verticem mortalis dextera contrectat et contingit. Pavet coelum, stupet terra, Jordanis arridet, mirantur archangeli Dominum Sabaoth inter manus baptizantis includi. Quid est, Joannes? Cherubim et Seraphim vix audent respicere, et tu nudum tenere praesumis! Hic est, in quem desiderant angeli prospicere (I Petr. I); cui, Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, sublimi melodiarum organo beatae civitatis conventus ingeminat (Isa. VI; Apoc. IV); qui solus habitat lucem inaccessibilem (I Tim. VI), Dominus virtutum, Deus scientiarum, misericordiarum pater, et tu non metuis! Tibi datum est, quod omnibus est negatum, baptizare eum qui baptizat in Spiritu sancto et igne, virginemque Virginis Filium virgineis manibus irrorare. Totus astupeo baptizanti, hominemque Dei magistrum revereor, dignantem admiror, veneror dignationem, et hominem video violentiam ipsis coelis inferre. Porro illud quale est quo in isto baptismate terminatur lex, finem accipit prophetia et omnis illa sacrificiorum multitudo propulsatur et pellitur? Hic incipit et stabilitur novae regenerationis perduranda purgatio, et in unam baptismatis formam legalium transeunt dispendia figurarum. Ad ablutionem enim aquae et invocationem sancti Spritus, sepelitur hircorum et vitulorum sanguinolenta congeries, et pecora pecoribus Judaeis relinquimus, illud Davidicum attendentes: «Holocaustum et pro peccato non postulasti (Psal. XXIX).»

Octavus est prima revelatio de Trinitate. A creatione coeli et terrae usque ad hunc locum nunquam Trinitas hominibus manifeste apparuit, sed rerum et verborum involueris involuta fuit tantae claritatis aeternitas. Denique creationem hominis Creator rerum summa dignitate commendans: «Faciamus, inquit, hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram (Gen. I).» Reverendum revera privilegium, nec ulli traditum creaturae. Creatur illa sublimior numerositas angelorum, et elementorum omnium ordinatur variata connexio, sed omnipotentis praesentia tantum opus alta taciturnitate prospectat.

The Savior also says: "Suffer it now; for so it becomes us to fulfill all justice (ibid.)." It is acquiesced on both sides to the salutary monitions, and John girds himself for baptizing and for suspecting the Lord of angels. The King of glory, the splendor of light, and the figure of the substance of God, is stripped of his garments, and is handled by the hands of John. That flesh assumed from the Virgin, and derived from a brighter matter, is stripped in the river, to be infused by the happy hands of the Baptist. The angels descend; and the whole hosts of the heavens run with all reverence to the Creator, and the dominating deities encompass both the one baptizing and the one baptized. A nobler creature pours water on the head of the Creator, and a mortal right hand handles and touches the vertex of God. The heaven fears, the earth is stupified, the Jordan smiles, the archangels wonder that the Lord of Sabaoth is included between the hands of the one baptizing. What is it, John? The Cherubim and Seraphim scarcely dare to look back, and you presume to hold the naked one! This is He, into whom the angels desire to look (1 Peter 1); to whom, Holy, holy, holy, the assembly of the blessed city ingeminates with the sublime organ of melodies (Isa. 6; Apoc. 4); who alone dwells in inaccessible light (1 Tim. 6), the Lord of virtues, the God of sciences, the father of mercies, and you do not fear! To you it was given, which was denied to all, to baptize Him who baptizes in the Holy Spirit and fire, and to bedew the virgin Son of the Virgin with virginal hands. I am totally astounded at the one baptizing, and I revere the man as the teacher of God, I admire the one deigning, I venerate the condescension, and I see a man bring violence to the heavens themselves. Furthermore, of what kind is that by which in this baptism the law is terminated, prophecy receives an end and all that multitude of sacrifices is repelled and driven away? Here begins and is established the lasting purgation of the new regeneration, and the expenditures of the legal figures pass into one form of baptism. For at the washing of water and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the bloody heap of goats and calves is buried, and we leave the cattle to the Jewish cattle, attending to that of David: "Whole burnt offering and for sin thou hast not required (Psalm 29)."

The eighth is the first revelation of the Trinity. From the creation of heaven and earth up to this place, the Trinity never appeared manifestly to men, but the eternity of so great clarity was wrapped in the veils of things and words. Finally, the Creator of things, commending the creation of man with the highest dignity, said: "Let us make man in our image and likeness (Gen. 1)." A truly venerable privilege, nor handed down to any creature. That more sublime number of angels is created, and the varied connection of all elements is ordered, but the presence of the Almighty looks forward to so great a work with deep silence.

Ut vero venitur ad hominem et nobilis creatura creari disponitur, accingit se Trinitas ad creandum, et consilium accipit Sapientia, ut creaturae dignitas Creatoris privilegio clara esse monstretur. Nec ibi tamen satis aperte divinae majestatis eluxere vocabula, cum ad angelos obsequentes quidam referant divini sermonis oraculum, vel, si minus hoc cautum est, signata pluralitas absque nominum differentia praedicetur. Abraham tres vidit, et unum adoravit (Gen. XVIII). Sed et ibi Scripturae sacrae reverentia nunc mixtim, nunc separatim claudit eloquium, ut modo Dominum, modo viros placeat nominare. Judaei tamen longam hic texunt reprehensionis parabolam, tres angelos a Domino missos asseverantes, unum ad nativitatem Isaac praedicendam, duos ad Sodomam subvertendam: Illum enim, cum quo locutus est justus, dicens: «Domine, si inveni gratiam in oculis tuis (Ibid.),» prophetali spiritu somniant cognovisse, nativitatis Isaac advenisse praeconem. Illum adorat, sicut Bersabee David regem, sociisque ejus propter ipsius reverentiam indefessus assistit (II Reg. III). Unde et nonnisi duo in subversione civitatum infelicium numerantur, illo superius jam reverso, qui nativitatem Isaac fideli devotione compleverat. Tres enim viri Saram vocari praecipiunt, sed unus est, qui promissionis insperatae manifestat arcanum. Haec Judaei, et qui magis elegerunt judaizare quam credere. Sed, ut breviter concludamus, omnis illa sive patriarcharum seu prophetantium copulata societas, nullam, vel in sermonibus vel in rebus, de Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto reperitur aperte fecisse mentionem. Veni ergo, et intuere filium Zachariae Deum et hominem propriis manibus continentem: et vide quia coeli aperiuntur ibi, et descendit Spiritus sanctus corporali specie sicut columba in Christum; et vox Patris audita est: «Hic est Filius meus dilectus (Matth. III).» Vides, quia ad sacratissimorum nominum novitatem coelorum palatia reserantur? Pater auditur in voce, Filius baptizatur in flumine, Spiritus sanctus in columbae specie demonstratur. Adest Joannes totius medius Trinitatis, gloriosumque Baptistam sanctificant indivisae substantiae personata vocabula; et nomen Trinitatis prioribus saeculis obvelatum, absque totius velaminis obumbratione relucet. Domine, quis est iste, quia innotuisti ei?

Nonus est testimonium sapientiae. Cum audisset Joannes in vinculis opera Christi, misit ad eum discipulos suos, et responsum est eis: «Caeci vident, etc. (Matth. XI),» quae veritatis evangelicae prosequitur copiosa narratio. Recedentibus autem nuntiis, ne forte in eorum praesentia adulationem redolere videretur, coepit Jesus dicere ad turbas de Joanne: «Quid existis in desertum videre? Arundinem vento agitatam? (Ibid.).» O mira testificatio Redemptoris! Quis ingressus est mundum, et mundum vel in aliquo non cognovit?

But when it comes to man and the noble creature is disposed to be created, the Trinity girds itself for creating, and Wisdom takes counsel, so that the dignity of the creature might be shown clear by the privilege of the Creator. Yet even there the names of the divine majesty did not shine forth clearly enough, since some refer the oracle of the divine speech to the obedient angels, or, if this is less cautious, a marked plurality is preached without difference of names. Abraham saw three, and adored one (Gen. 18). But even there the reverence of the holy Scripture closes the speech now mixed, now separate, so that it pleases to name now the Lord, now men. The Jews, however, weave a long parable of reprehension here, asserting that three angels were sent by the Lord, one to foretell the birth of Isaac, two to subvert Sodom: for that one, with whom the just man spoke, saying: "Lord, if I have found grace in thy eyes (ibid.)," they dream in a prophetic spirit to have known that the herald of the birth of Isaac had come. Him he adores, just as Bathsheba the king David, and assists untired his companions on account of his reverence (2 Sam. 3). Whence also not but two are numbered in the subversion of the unhappy cities, that one having already returned above, who had completed the birth of Isaac with faithful devotion. For three men command Sarah to be called, but it is one who manifests the secret of the unhoped-for promise. These things the Jews, and those who chose rather to Judaize than to believe. But, that we may conclude briefly, all that coupled society whether of patriarchs or of those prophesying, is found to have made no open mention, whether in words or in things, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Come therefore, and behold the son of Zechariah holding God and man with his own hands: and see that the heavens are opened there, and the Holy Spirit descends in bodily shape like a dove upon Christ; and the voice of the Father was heard: "This is my beloved Son (Matth. 3)." Do you see, that for the novelty of the most sacred names the palaces of the heavens are unlocked? The Father is heard in the voice, the Son is baptized in the river, the Holy Spirit is shown in the shape of a dove. John is present as the mediator of the whole Trinity, and the personified names of the undivided substance sanctify the glorious Baptist; and the name of the Trinity, veiled in prior ages, shines forth without the overshadowing of any veil. Lord, who is he, that thou hast made thyself known to him?

The ninth is the testimony of Wisdom. When John had heard in bonds the works of Christ, he sent to Him his disciples, and it was answered to them: "The blind see, etc. (Matth. 11)," which the copious narrative of the evangelical truth follows. But when the messengers had withdrawn, lest by chance in their presence He should seem to smell of adulation, Jesus began to say to the crowds concerning John: "What went you out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (ibid.)" O wonderful testifying of the Redeemer! Who has entered the world, and has not known the world even in something?

Quis est, quem vel ventosa felicitas, vel adversitas turbida, vel cujuslibet peccati aura tenuior non inflexit? Ad extremum subinfertur quod terram excedat, transeat coelum, ipsumque verticem angelicae dignitatis attingat. «Inter natos, inquit, mulierum, non surrexit major Joanne Baptista (Ibid.).» Quid vis amplius? de nullo alio dici potuit, dicit Augustinus, quod dictum est de Joanne. Non opponas mihi evangelistam inter caeteros apostolos magis dilectum? non apostolorum principem omnibus apostolis antelatum; non Vas electionis ad coeli tertii secreta translatum; nec apostolicus splendor audeat occurrere Praecursori, quia jam omnes isti adolescentiae metas excesserant, cum a Veritate prolatum est: «Inter natos mulierum non surrexit major Joanne Baptista.» Considera mansiones regni, et universum ordinem humanae generationis obambula, solumque Joannem tam novis quam veteribus videbis esse praepositum.

Decimus est assertio matris Ecclesiae. Texitur ora chlamydi unguentumque profusum in capite, extremam quoque vestimenti fimbriam inundanter infundit. Illa enim mater et magistra omnium Ecclesiarum Ecclesia Romana, cui dictum est; «Ego pro te rogavi, ut non deficiat fides tua (Luc. XXII),» in honore Joannis Baptistae, post Salvatoris nomen consecrata est et signata. Dignum namque erat ut sententiam sponsi sponsae sequeretur auctoritas, et singularem amicum ejus illuc proveheret, ubi principatum ipsa conscendit. Electio procul dubio singularis, in illa ipsa urbe Joannem primatum Ecclesiae vindicare, quem duo coeli luminaria morte clarissima consecrarunt. Crucifigitur Petrus, Paulus obtruncatur, dignitas remanet Praecursori. Purpuratur Roma multitudine martyrum, totaque sublimitas beato refunditur patriarchae. Joannes ubique major, in omnibus singularis, mirabilis super omnes. Quis sic gloriose annuntiatus est? Quis ita specialiter in matris utero Spiritu sancto legitur fuisse repletus? Quem legistis infra matris uterum exsultasse? (Luc. II.) Cujus nativitatem vidistis celebrare Ecclesiam Dei? Quis sic puer eremum concupivit? Quis ita legitur sublimiter conversatus? Quis poenitentiam, et regnum coelorum primus ostendit? Quis baptizavit Regem gloriae? Cui se primum Trinitas revelavit? Cui tale testimonium perhibuit Deus? Quem sic honoravit Ecclesia? Vide si non haec omnia ita singulariter sunt hic singularia, ut nullus mortalium praedictis dignitatibus audeat inhiare.

Who is he, whom either windy felicity, or turbid adversity, or any thinner breeze of sin has not bent? At the end there is subjoined what exceeds the earth, passes the heaven, and touches the very vertex of angelic dignity. "Among those born," He says, "of women, there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist (ibid.)." What do you want more? Of no other could it be said, says Augustine, what was said of John. Do you not oppose to me the evangelist more beloved among the other apostles? Not the prince of the apostles preferred to all the apostles; not the Vessel of election translated to the secrets of the third heaven; nor let the apostolic splendor dare to run against the Precursor, because all those had already exceeded the goals of adolescence, when it was brought forth by the Truth: "Among those born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Consider the mansions of the kingdom, and walk about the whole order of human generation, and you will see that John alone is set before both the new and the old.

The tenth is the assertion of Mother Church. The edge of the cloak is woven and the ointment poured on the head, also flows abundantly into the extreme fringe of the garment. For that mother and teacher of all Churches, the Roman Church, to which it was said: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not (Luke 22)," was consecrated and signed in the honor of John the Baptist, after the name of the Savior. For it was worthy that the authority of the bride should follow the sentence of the bridegroom, and should promote his singular friend thither, where she herself ascended the princedom. An election without doubt singular, to vindicate the primacy of the Church for John in that very city, which the two lights of heaven consecrated by a most clear death. Peter is crucified, Paul is beheaded, the dignity remains to the Precursor. Rome is empurpled by the multitude of martyrs, and the whole sublimity is poured back to the blessed patriarch. John is everywhere greater, singular in all things, wonderful above all. Who was so gloriously announced? Who is read to have been so specially filled with the Holy Spirit in the mother's womb? Whom have you read to have exulted within the mother's womb? (Luke 2.) Whose birth have you seen the Church of God celebrate? Who so as a boy desired the desert? Who is read to have conversed so sublimely? Who first showed penance, and the kingdom of heaven? Who baptized the King of glory? To whom did the Trinity first reveal itself? To whom did God bear such testimony? Whom did the Church so honor? See if all these things are not so singularly singular here, that no mortal should dare to gape at the aforesaid dignities.

Forsitan mihi disponis opponere quia sic ista habet propria, ut caetera sanctorum communia non attingat. Audi ergo: Joannes patriarcha, imo patriarcharum finis et caput; Joannes propheta, imo plusquam propheta: quia quem venientem nuntiat, digito demonstrat: Joannes angelus, sed et inter angelos electus, Salvatore testante, qui dicit: «Ecce mitto angelum meum, qui praeparabit viam ante faciem meam (Matth. XI).» Joannes apostolus, sed et apostolorum primus, et princeps; quia, «fuit homo missus a Deo (Joan. I).» Joannes evangelista, sed et Evangelii primus messor, praedicans Evangelium regni. Joannes virgo, imo virginitatis insigne, pudicitiae titulus, castitatis exemplum. Joannes martyr, sed et martyrum lumen, inter nativitatem mortemque Christi constantissimi forma martyrii. Praetereo quia vox clamantis in deserto (Isa. XL), quia praeco Verbi, quod Judicis praecursor. Illud quoque relinquo, quia usque ad Joannem lex et prophetae, quia Joannes ipse est Elias, quod lucerna sit ardens, lucens, quod amicus Sponsi, Sponsae praeparator. Silentio transeo quod sic novem angelorum ordinibus insertus est, ut etiam ad Seraphim apicem transferatur. Verum hoc laboriosi operis est, et sensus nostri paupertas non sufficit. Sufficiant haec ad praesens, quae dicta sunt de laude Joannis ad gloriam Redemptoris, qui est Deus benedictus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

* SERMO XXIV. II. IN NATIVITATE S. JOANNIS BAPTISTAE. (XXIV JUNII.)

Hodierna festivitas, dilectissimi, toto terrarum orbe conspicua, mentes nostras eo clarius splendore quodam novae lucis irradiat, quo et primordium nostrae redemptionis ac veri luminis ortum ut recolamus invitat. Cui enim meditanti nativitatem Joannis, non mox occurrit nativitas Christi, praesertim cum nascendi Joannem de patre sene et sterili matre nulla alia exstiterit causa, nisi ut mirabiliter natus praecederet singulariter nasciturum. Amicus videlicet Sponsum, famulus Dominum, vox Verbum, lucerna Solem, praeco Judicem, salvatus praecurreret Salvatorem. Testatur et ipse Joannes, hanc esse sui adventus causam, non ut simpliciter veniret, sed ut Dominum ad suae manifestationis indicium praeveniret. «Post me, inquit, venit vir qui ante me factus est; quia prior me erat: et ego nesciebam eum: sed ut manifestaretur in Israel, propterea veni ego in aqua baptizans (Joan. I).» Praevenit eum nascendo, praedicando, baptizando, moriendo, postremo et ad inferos descendendo. Praecessit itaque Dominum, praecessit et semetipsum.

Perhaps you dispose to oppose to me that he has these things as his own in such a way that he does not touch the other common things of the saints. Hear therefore: John is a patriarch, nay the end and head of patriarchs; John a prophet, nay more than a prophet: because Him whom he announces coming, he demonstrates with his finger: John an angel, but also chosen among the angels, by the testimony of the Savior, who says: "Behold I send my angel, who shall prepare the way before my face (Matth. 11)." John an apostle, but also the first and prince of the apostles; because, "there was a man sent from God (John 1)." John an evangelist, but also the first reaper of the Gospel, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. John a virgin, nay the ensign of virginity, the title of modesty, the example of chastity. John a martyr, but also the light of martyrs, between the birth and death of Christ the form of the most constant martyrdom. I pass over that he is the voice of one crying in the desert (Isa. 40), that he is the herald of the Word, that he is the precursor of the Judge. I leave that too, that until John were the law and the prophets, that John himself is Elijah, that he is a burning and shining lamp, that he is the friend of the Bridegroom, the preparer of the Bride. I pass over in silence that he was so inserted into the nine orders of angels, that he is even transferred to the apex of the Seraphim. Truly this is of a laborious work, and the poverty of our sense does not suffice. Let these things which have been said of the praise of John suffice for the present to the glory of the Redeemer, who is God blessed forever. Amen.

* SERMON XXIV. II. ON THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. (JUNE 24.)

Today's festival, dearly beloved, conspicuous in the whole world, irradiates our minds so much the more clearly with a certain splendor of a new light, by which it also invites us to recollect the beginning of our redemption and the rising of the true light. For to whom meditating on the nativity of John does the nativity of Christ not soon occur, especially since no other cause existed for John being born of an old father and a sterile mother, except that being wonderfully born he might precede Him who was to be singularly born. Namely, that the friend might precede the Bridegroom, the servant the Lord, the voice the Word, the lamp the Sun, the herald the Judge, the saved the Savior. John himself also testifies that this is the cause of his coming, not that he might simply come, but that he might precede the Lord for the indication of his manifestation. "After me," he says, "comes a man who was made before me; because he was before me: and I knew him not: but that he might be manifested in Israel, therefore am I come baptizing in water (John 1)." He preceded Him by being born, by preaching, by baptizing, by dying, and finally also by descending to the lower parts. And so he preceded the Lord, and preceded even himself.

Ante enim quam conciperetur in utero, paternum os incredulitas clausit; quod ipse antequam loqueretur, expressione sui nominis mirabiliter reseravit. Plane cum necdum posset hominibus verba depromere, potuit exsultando latentem in utero Virginis Regem coeli maternis visceribus nuntiare. Spiritus enim sanctus, qui eum, antequam vitales carperet auras, animavit, ipsum quoque materni pudoris hospitium, in quo degebat, implevit. Unde Elisabeth: «Ecce, inquit, ut facta est vox salutationis tuae in auribus meis, exsultavit in gaudio infans in utero meo (Luc. I).»

Ubi quaerendum est quomodo fieri potuit ut in eum Spiritus sanctus sua dona diffunderet; cum, juxta ritum conditionis humanae, adhuc in iniquitatibus conceptus existeret, et necdum originalis peccati vinculum, percepta legalis observantiae circumcisione solvisset, cum per Moysen divina vox dicat: «Masculus, cujus praeputii caro circumcisa non fuerit, peribit anima illa de populo meo, quoniam pactum meum irritum fecit (Gen. XVII).»

Sed notandum est quia Spiritus sancti gratia lege non stringitur, necessitatis vinculo non tenetur; sed sicut ubi vult spirat, sic et quibus vult gratis sua dona dispensat. Nam et Cornelium centurionem, antequam baptismi susciperet lavacrum, inspiravit (Act. X): et in quosdam adhuc gentiles, loquente Petro, non solum ut Scriptura testatur, cecidit, sed etiam, ut linguis loquerentur, instruxit (Ibid.). Quid ergo mirum, si B. Joannem ante legalis mandati quodcunque remedium Spiritus sanctus implevit [replevit], quem ipsius legis, et Prophetarum ac totius Veteris Testamenti limitem quemdam, atque, ut ita loquar, intransmeabilem terminum providentia divina constituit? Lex enim et prophetae, ut Veritas ait, usque ad Joannem (Matth. XI). Joannes enim iste cum Domino circumcisionem quidem in sua carne suscepit, sed suscipiens terminavit. Et ideo qui novae gratiae praeco et magnificus annuntiator enituit, ad evadendum originale peccatum circumcisione non eguit, sed eum supra legem, supra humanae conditionis ordinem electio divina provexit, cui etiam tanti honoris collata est gloria ut nativitati ejus ipsa Dei Genitrix interesset, ejusque principium, latens in utero, mundi Conditor sua praesentia dedicaret. Testatur hoc Lucas evangelista, cum dicit: «Mansit autem Maria cum illa, videlicet Elisabeth, quasi mensibus tribus, et reversa est in domum suam (Luc. I).» A conceptione quippe Domini, usque ad nativitatem B. Joannis tres menses sunt. Nolebat itaque Maria discedere, donec grandaevae et puerperae ministerium sedulitatis impenderet, et quae gestabat in aula sui corporis Regem, cerneret anteire praeconem. Felix partus, quem illa lux excipit quae illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum (Joan. I)!

For before he was conceived in the womb, unbelief closed the paternal mouth; which he himself, before he spoke, wonderfully unlocked by the expression of his name. Plainly when he could not yet bring forth words to men, he could by exulting announce the King of heaven latent in the Virgin's womb to the maternal bowels. For the Holy Spirit, who animated him before he drew the vital breezes, also filled the guest-chamber of maternal modesty in which he dwelt. Whence Elizabeth: "Behold," she said, "as the voice of thy salutation was made in my ears, the infant in my womb exulted in joy (Luke 1)."

Where it is to be asked how it could be that the Holy Spirit should diffuse His gifts into him; when, according to the rite of human condition, he still existed conceived in iniquities, and had not yet loosed the bond of original sin by the circumcision of the legal observance perceived, when through Moses the divine voice says: "The male, the flesh of whose foreskin shall not be circumcised, that soul shall perish from my people, because he has made my covenant void (Gen. 17)."

But it is to be noted that the grace of the Holy Spirit is not bound by the law, is not held by the bond of necessity; but as it breathes where it wills, so also it dispenses its gifts freely to whom it wills. For even the centurion Cornelius, before he received the washing of baptism, it inspired (Acts 10): and upon certain ones still gentiles, while Peter was speaking, not only as Scripture testifies, did it fall, but even instructed them that they should speak with tongues (ibid.). What wonder then, if the Holy Spirit filled Blessed John before any remedy of the legal mandate, whom divine providence constituted as a certain limit and, so to speak, an impassable term of the law itself, and of the Prophets and of the whole Old Testament? For the Law and the prophets, as Truth says, were until John (Matth. 11). For this John, with the Lord, indeed received circumcision in his flesh, but in receiving it he terminated it. And therefore he who shone forth as the herald and magnificent announcer of the new grace, did not need circumcision to evade original sin, but divine election promoted him above the law, above the order of human condition, to whom also the glory of so great honor was conferred that the Mother of God herself was present at his birth, and the Founder of the world, latent in the womb, dedicated his beginning by His presence. The evangelist Luke testifies this when he says: "And Mary remained with her, namely Elizabeth, as it were three months, and returned to her own house (Luke 1)." For from the conception of the Lord, up to the nativity of Blessed John, there are three months. Mary therefore was unwilling to depart, until she should spend the service of diligence on the aged woman and the one about to bring forth, and should see the herald precede Him whom she was carrying in the hall of her body as King. Happy birth, which that light receives which enlightens every man coming into this world (John 1)!

Sed dum haec loquimur, repente quaestio nobis oboritur, quae dubietatem inferre non sine causa videatur. Testatur etenim Dominus quia inter natos mulierum non surrexit major Joanne Baptista (Matth. XI). Exclusit itaque majorem, non negavit aequalem. Hinc est quod ad Zachariam angelus dicit: «Ipse praecedet ante illum in spiritu, et virtute Eliae (Luc. I).» Par ergo Eliae Joannes videtur, in cujus spiritu et virtute venturus asseritur; praesertim cum et alibi ipsa Veritas dicat: «Elias jam venit, et non cognoverunt eum, sed fecerunt in eum quodcunque voluerunt (Matth. XVII, 12):» et si vultis scire, Joannes ipse est Elias. Sed ecce e diverso illud occurrit quod Eliseus duplicem Eliae spiritum, juxta modum suae petitionis accepit. «Obsecro, Domine, ut fiat spiritus tuus duplex in me (IV Reg. II).» Quod si Eliam Eliseus dupliciter antecellit, aequalem Eliae Joannem quomodo non superat, quo inter natos mulierum major nemo surrexit?

Verumtamen, ut solvatur quaestio, ponderandus est sensus, ut quod durum in verbis exterioribus sonat, de pia intentione procedere discretio sobrie sentientis intelligat. Durum quippe sonuit quod Eliseus duplicem magistri spiritum petiit; cum non sit discipulus super magistrum (Matth. X). Sed ex pura mente petitio ista processit, quia non terrenum aliquid, sed spiritualem gratiam postulavit. Unde et Elias quasi subindignatus incanta discipuli verba redarguit, cum ait «Rem difficilem postulasti (IV Reg. II)»: simplicitatem vero piae intentionis aspiciens, praesto subjungit: «Attamen si videris me quando tollar a te, erit quod petisti (Ibid.)» Non videlicet duplicitas, quam incautus sermo profundit, sed donum spiritus, quod humili ac sincera mentis intentione quaesivit. Hoc itaque modo nequaquam Joannem superat Eliseus, sicut nec major est quam Elias. Verumtamen si sacrae historiae tenorem inspicimus diligenter, uberiorem sive clariorem Eliseum quam Eliam in miraculorum fuisse virtutibus invenimus. Ille nimirum vivens defunctum puerum vitae restituit (III Reg. XVII), iste jam mortuus mortuum suscitavit (IV Reg. XIII). Illo prophetante, hydria farinae, et lecythus olei non defecit (III Reg. XVII); iste obsessae et afflictae civitati protinus in diem alterum incredibiles hostilium castrorum copias obtulit (IV Reg. VI). Atque, ut brevi cuncta concludam, Elias duodecim, Eliseus, ut Scripturae veritas tradit, viginti quatuor miraculorum signis enituit, quae videlicet, quia fastidium devitamus, hic enumerare postponimus. Quomodo igitur hujus me nodo quaestionis expediam, ut prolata magnitudine Joannis, non vacillet sententia Veritatis, qua dicitur in natis mulierum non esse majorem Joanne Baptista? Nam si major est Eliseus quam Elias, ergo major est et Joanne. Quod fieri impossibile est.

But while we speak these things, suddenly a question arises for us, which not without cause seems to bring in doubt. For the Lord testifies that among those born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist (Matth. 11). He excluded therefore a greater, he did not deny an equal. Hence it is that the angel says to Zechariah: "He himself shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1)." John therefore seems equal to Elijah, in whose spirit and power it is asserted he is to come; especially since also elsewhere Truth itself says: "Elijah has already come, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they would (Matth. 17:12):" and if you will know, John himself is Elijah. But behold on the contrary that occurs, that Elisha received a double spirit of Elijah, according to the manner of his petition. "I beseech thee, Lord, that thy spirit be double in me (2 Kings 2)." Because if Elisha excels Elijah doubly, how does he not surpass John equal to Elijah, than whom among those born of women no one greater has risen?

However, that the question may be solved, the sense is to be weighed, so that what sounds hard in exterior words, the discretion of one soberly perceiving may understand to proceed from a pious intention. For it sounded hard that Elisha sought a double spirit of his master; since the disciple is not above the master (Matth. 10). But that petition proceeded from a pure mind, because he asked not for something earthly, but for spiritual grace. Whence also Elijah, as it were somewhat indignant at the words of the incautious disciple, rebuked him, saying "Thou hast asked a hard thing (2 Kings 2)": but looking at the simplicity of the pious intention, he subjoins at once: "Nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be what thou hast asked (ibid.)" Not plainly the duplicity, which the incautious speech pours out, but the gift of the spirit, which he sought with a humble and sincere intention of mind. In this way, therefore, Elisha by no means surpasses John, just as neither is he greater than Elijah. Nevertheless, if we inspect the tenor of the sacred history diligently, we find Elisha to have been richer or clearer than Elijah in the virtues of miracles. That one indeed, living, restored a dead boy to life (1 Kings 17), this one already dead raised a dead man (2 Kings 13). By that one prophesying, the jar of meal and the cruse of oil failed not (1 Kings 17); this one offered at once on the second day incredible supplies of the hostile camps to a besieged and afflicted city (2 Kings 6). And, that I may conclude all briefly, Elijah shone forth with twelve, Elisha, as the truth of Scripture hands down, with twenty-four signs of miracles, which indeed, because we avoid fastidiousness, we postpone to enumerate here. How therefore shall I expedite myself from the knot of this question, so that the magnitude of John being brought forth, the sentence of the Truth may not waver, by which it is said that among those born of women there is not a greater than John the Baptist? For if Elisha is greater than Elijah, therefore he is also greater than John. Which is impossible to be.

Sed notandum quod aliud est magnum quid agere in signis miraculorum, aliud magnum esse in excellentia meritorum. Nam si de miraculis agitur, nullum fecisse miraculum Joannem in Scripturarum paginis invenitur. Sed nunquid propter hoc infimus erit omnium sanctorum, quia nulla traditur signa fecisse virtutum? Eliseus ergo major est quam Elias in exhibitione signorum, quem tamen nequaquam superat in cumulo meritorum. Ita et Joannes par quidem est Eliae; quia sicut ille praeco futurus est judicis; ita et hic praecursor factus est Redemptoris, sed major Elia, quia quem demonstravit, etiam baptizavit. In illo denique baptismatis sacramento Jordanis unda magis est lota quam lavit, ex qua insuper vim sanctificationis omnis ubique terrarum aqua concepit. Illic B. Joannes vocem Patris audivit, Spiritum sanctum in columbae specie descendentem aspexit, tremendum angelis Dei Filium suis manibus inclinatum, aquis intinxit. Illud enim fundamentum et origo baptismatis rebus ostendit, quod Veritas postmodum discipulos agere verbis virtute plenis edocuit. «Ite, inquit, docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti (Matth. XXVIII).» Illic res manifesta et non verba; hic verba et res vera, sed occulta. Joannes itaque humanorum limes est meritorum. Quantumcunque enim apostolici senatus excellat auctoritas, quantumcunque vel patriarcharum fides in divina agnitione proficiat, vel prophetarum oracula ad referenda arcana mysteria convalescant, quantumlibet certe cumuletur triumphantium gloria martyrum, quantumvis effloreat vernans pudicitia virginum, vel in verbis vitae se exerceat lingua doctorum, citra metam Joannis omnia cohibentur, nihilque virtutis humanae, nihil religionis, nihil perfectionis ultra progreditur. Cujus incomparabilis vitae seriem non historiographus quispiam post ejus obitum texuit, sed archangelus ille praecipuus antequam conceptus esset in utero, sicut Domini, sic et hujus opera miranda narravit. Hujus sane praeconium non assertione veridici cujuslibet hominis, sed ex ore ipsius summae didicimus Veritatis. Et ille est assertor et laudator Joannis, qui a cunctis coelestibus ac terrenis laudatur et benedicitur creaturis. Ab illo denique verbo Joannis sunt deprompta praeconia, per quod fundata est arida, moventur sidera, condita sunt elementa. Enimvero quantae magnificentiae est ab illo mereri gloriam laudis, apud quem summa felicitas est impetrare veniam pietatis, et ab illo praeferri hominibus, a quo gloriosum est utcunque probari? Ait enim: «Quid existis videre? prophetam? Dico vobis et plusquam prophetam (Matth. XI).»

But it is to be noted that it is one thing to do some great thing in signs of miracles, another to be great in the excellence of merits. For if it is treated of miracles, John is found in the pages of the Scriptures to have done no miracle. But shall he on this account be the lowest of all the saints, because he is handed down to have done no signs of virtues? Elisha therefore is greater than Elijah in the exhibition of signs, whom nevertheless he by no means surpasses in the heap of merits. So also John is indeed equal to Elijah; because as that one is to be the herald of the judge; so also this one was made the precursor of the Redeemer, but greater than Elijah, because Him whom he demonstrated, he also baptized. Finally, in that sacrament of baptism the wave of the Jordan was rather washed than washed, from which moreover the water everywhere on earth conceived the power of all sanctification. There Blessed John heard the voice of the Father, beheld the Holy Spirit descending in the shape of a dove, and dipped in the waters the Son of God, to be feared by the angels, bowed down by his own hands. For he showed in things that foundation and origin of baptism, which Truth afterwards taught the disciples to do in words full of power. "Go," He said, "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matth. 28)." There the thing is manifest and not words; here words and the thing true, but hidden. John therefore is the limit of human merits. For however much the authority of the apostolic senate may excel, however much the faith of the patriarchs may profit in divine recognition, or the oracles of the prophets may grow strong to report secret mysteries, however much certainly the glory of the triumphant martyrs may be heaped up, however much the budding modesty of virgins may flourish, or the tongue of doctors may exercise itself in the words of life, all are restrained within the goal of John, and nothing of human virtue, nothing of religion, nothing of perfection proceeds beyond. Whose incomparable series of life no historiographer wove after his death, but that principal archangel before he was conceived in the womb, as of the Lord, so also of this one narrated the wonderful works. His heraldry indeed we have learned not from the assertion of any veracious man, but from the mouth of the highest Truth itself. And he is the asserter and praiser of John, who is praised and blessed by all celestial and terrestrial creatures. Finally, from that word the praises of John were drawn, through which the dry land was founded, the stars are moved, the elements were created. Indeed of what great magnificence is it to merit the glory of praise from Him, with whom the highest felicity is to obtain the pardon of piety, and to be preferred to men by Him, by whom it is glorious to be approved in any way? For He said: "What went you out to see? a prophet? I say to you and more than a prophet (Matth. 11)."

Sed quia propheta inter caeteros homines egregius est et insignis, qui nullum in communi hominum genere habens aequalem, etiam prophetae praeponitur, restat, ut jam non homo, sed angelus nuncupetur. Unde et subdidit: «Hic est enim de quo scriptum est: Ecce ego mitto angelum meum, qui praeparabit viam ante faciem tuam (Ibid.).» Sed et in suppositione sua melius B. Joannes ostenditur quantum caeteris hominibus praeferatur, de quo Dominus: «Qui autem, inquit, minor est in regno coelorum, major est illo (Ibid.).» Quia nimirum Redemptor noster, qui Joanne minor est in terra per accessum succedentis aetatis, in coelo major est per aeternae privilegium majestatis. O felix ista dejectio, quando homo Deo supponitur, a Creatore creatura praeceditur, exiguus ab immensitatis gloria superatur! Major esse Joanne Christus in coelo dicitur, ubi a cunctis angelicae dignitatis virtutibus adoratur, cui cherubim, et seraphim humiliter procidunt, cujus Principatus et Potestates imperium contremiscunt, cujus denique vultum desiderant angeli prospicere (I Petr. I); Joanni se perhibet in coelesti dignitate praeesse, in cujus plane conspectu omnes gentes quasi stilla sunt situlae, et juxta prophetae vaticinium, quasi nihilum, et inane reputatae sunt (Isa. XL); beato viro se non dedignatur in comparatione praeponere, ut inveniatur homo apud Deum pro meritorum excellentia quasi locum comparationis habere. Qui enim auctor est celsitudinis, ipse nobis factus est magister humilitatis. Ipsi gloria e imperium, e modo, e amodo, in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XXV.

III. IN NATIVITATE S. JOANNIS BAPTISTAE. (XXIV JUL.)

Multa, dilectissimi, novimus in laudem B. Joannis a patribus nostris elimato stylo composita, et luculenter expressa. Quapropter rudes nos eruditis ingerere, et inter eloquentes erubescimus balbutire. Sed quis taceat in nativitate vocis? Quis obmutescat a laude praeconis, nisi forte qui diffidit ad hoc quod angelitus audit? Zacharias nempe dum loquentis angeli non credit oraculo, loquendi mox privatur officio, et ad vocis adventum, vocis amittit eloquium (Luc. I). At vero progenita sobole, quae paterni prosapiam generis novae gloriae titulo decorabat, dum jam non addubitat, sed imponere potius nomen exsultat, non modo reformatae sibi locutionis organum restituitur, sed et prophetici spiritus gratia cumulatur; et qui eatenus facultatem proferendi cujuscunque sermonis amiserat, jam prophetalis vaticinii ditatus oraculo, mysterii salutaris arcana revelat. Joannes plane vox erat, Verbum praecurrebat, et Verbum annuntiabat.

But because a prophet is outstanding and distinguished among other men, who having no equal in the common race of men, is even set before a prophet, it remains, that he should now be called not a man, but an angel. Whence also he added: "For this is he of whom it is written: Behold I send my angel, who shall prepare the way before thy face (ibid.)." But also in his own supposition Blessed John is better shown how much he is preferred to other men, concerning whom the Lord said: "But he," He says, "who is minor in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he (ibid.)." Because namely our Redeemer, who is minor than John on earth through the access of succeeding age, is greater in heaven through the privilege of eternal majesty. O happy that dejection, when man is supposed to God, the creature is preceded by the Creator, the small is surpassed by the glory of immensity! Christ is said to be greater than John in heaven, where He is adored by all the virtues of angelic dignity, to whom the cherubim and seraphim humbly fall down, whose Princedoms and Powers tremble at His empire, whose face finally the angels desire to look into (1 Peter 1); He shows that He precedes John in celestial dignity, in whose sight plainly all nations are as a drop of a bucket, and according to the prophecy of the prophet, are reputed as nothing, and a void (Isa. 40); He does not disdain to set himself before the blessed man in comparison, so that man may be found to have as it were a place of comparison with God for the excellence of merits. For He who is the author of loftiness, He was made for us the teacher of humility. To Him be glory and empire, both now, and from now, forever and ever. Amen.

Sermon XXV.

III. ON THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. (JUNE 24.)

Many things, dearly beloved, we have known composed with a polished style by our fathers in the praise of Blessed John, and clearly expressed. Wherefore we, the rude, are ashamed to thrust ourselves among the learned, and to babble among the eloquent. But who may be silent at the birth of the voice? Who may be mute from the praise of the herald, except perhaps he who distrusts that which is heard from the angel? Zechariah, indeed, while he does not believe the oracle of the angel speaking, is soon deprived of the office of speaking, and at the arrival of the voice, loses the eloquence of the voice (Luke 1). But truly with the offspring brought forth, who decorated the lineage of the paternal race with the title of a new glory, while he no longer doubts, but rather exults to impose the name, not only is the organ of speech reformed to him restored, but also he is heaped up with the grace of the prophetic spirit; and he who had until then lost the power of bringing forth any speech, now enriched by the oracle of the prophetic vaticination, reveals the secrets of the salutary mystery. John plainly was the voice, he preceded the Word, and announced the Word.

Hujus vocis, sive praeconis, et Isaias prophetarum eximius praeco factus fuerat, cum clamabat: «Vox clamantis in deserto: Parate viam Domini (Isa. XL).» Per Malachiam quoque divina vox ait: «Ecce mitto angelum meum, qui praeparabit viam tuam ante te.»

Pensemos, fratres charissimi, vir iste quam magnificae privilegio sublimitatis emineat, quam incomparabili celsitudine meritorum inter sanctorum choros excellat, qui ad instar Salvatoris, et a prophetis ante praedictus, et ab eodem, quo Dominus, angelo nuntiatus: ipsius insuper testimonio Veritatis immensis laudum praeconiis exstitit gloriosus. Talem quippe decebat ut haberet coelestis Sponsus amicum; talis oportebat ut esset foederator coelestium nuptiarum. «Qui habet, inquit, sponsam, sponsus est (Joan. III); amicus autem sponsi, qui stat et audit eum, gaudio gaudet propter vocem sponsi.» Ut autem sancta Ecclesia ab omni coeno contagii purgaretur, et non habens maculam neque rugam (Ephes. V), coelestis Sponsi thalamos ingredi mereretur, beati hujus paranymphi mysterio factum est, qui et Jordanicis fluctibus immersit, ipsa quoque fluenta tergentem, et ejusdem baptismi totiusque munditiae lavit auctorem.

Harum profecto nuptiarum Judas ille figuram tenuit, qui ad tondendas oves in Thamnas cum Hira, sui videlicet gregis opilione, descendit (Gen. XXXVIII). Thamnas autem deficiens interpretatur, per quam videlicet Synagoga, in qua reges et prophetae defecerant, simul et unctio, donec veniret, cui repositum erat ostenditur. Unde et per prophetam dicitur: «Cum venerit Sanctus sanctorum, cessabit unctio (Dan. IX).» Quid itaque per Judam, qui ad tondendas oves in Thamnas venit, nisi Redemptor noster intelligitur, qui ut oves, quae perierant domus Israel (Luc. XV), exoneraret peccatis, ad Synagogam venisse cognoscitur? Unde et Sponsus ad sponsam in Canticis: «Dentes tui sicut grex tonsarum, quae ascenderunt de lavacro (Cant. IV).» Porro dentes Ecclesiae sancti noscuntur esse doctores, quorum primo dictum est: «Macta, et manduca (Act. X).» Ac si diceret: Ab eo, quod sunt, gladio spiritus, hoc est verbo praedicationis, occide, et in corpus transfer Ecclesiae. Dentes igitur sponsae sunt doctores sancti, qui quoniam simplices per innocentiam sunt, et omnia relinquentes, facultatum suarum velleribus sunt exuti, ac sacri baptismatis unda purificati, sicut grex tonsarum sunt, quae ascenderunt de lavacro. Venit itaque Judas ad tondendas oves, non quidem solus, sed cum pastore suo Odollamite, cui nomen erat Hiras. Quem per Odollamitem intelligimus, nisi Joannem? Interpretatur autem Odollamites testimonio in aqua.

Of this voice, or herald, even Isaiah the distinguished herald of the prophets had been made, when he cried: "The voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord (Isa. 40)." Through Malachi also the divine voice says: "Behold I send my angel, who shall prepare thy way before thee."

Let us weigh, most dear brothers, this man by the privilege of how magnificent a sublimity he stands out, by what incomparable loftiness of merits he excels among the choirs of the saints, who after the likeness of the Savior, was both foretold before by the prophets, and announced by the same angel as the Lord: moreover, by the testimony of the Truth itself he stood out glorious with immense heraldries of praises. Such a one indeed it was becoming that the celestial Bridegroom should have as a friend; such a one it was fitting should be the federator of the celestial nuptials. "He who has," he says, "the bride, is the bridegroom (John 3); but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the voice of the bridegroom." But so that the holy Church might be purged from all filth of contagion, and not having spot nor wrinkle (Ephes. 5), might merit to enter the chambers of the celestial Bridegroom, it was done by the mystery of this blessed paranymph, who both immersed in the Jordan waves, and washed the author of that same baptism and of all purity, cleansing the very floods.

Of these nuptials indeed that Judah held a figure, who went down to shear the sheep in Timnah with Hira, namely the shepherd of his flock (Gen. 38). But Timnah is interpreted as "failing," through which namely the Synagogue, in which kings and prophets had failed, and at the same time the anointing, until He should come to whom it was laid up, is shown. Whence also it is said through the prophet: "When the Holy of Holies shall come, the anointing shall cease (Dan. 9)." What therefore is understood by Judah, who came to shear the sheep in Timnah, unless our Redeemer, who is known to have come to the Synagogue that He might exonerate from sins the sheep which had perished of the house of Israel (Luke 15)? Whence also the Bridegroom to the bride in the Canticles: "Thy teeth are as a flock of shorn ones, which have ascended from the washing (Cant. 4)." Furthermore, the teeth of the Church are known to be the holy doctors, to whom it was first said: "Kill, and eat (Acts 10)." As if he should say: From that which they are, kill with the sword of the spirit, that is by the word of preaching, and transfer into the body of the Church. The teeth therefore of the bride are the holy doctors, who because they are simple through innocence, and leaving all things, are stripped of the fleeces of their faculties, and purified by the wave of sacred baptism, are as a flock of shorn ones, which have ascended from the washing. Judah therefore came to shear the sheep, not indeed alone, but with his shepherd the Odollamite, whose name was Hira. Whom do we understand by the Odollamite, unless John? But Odollamite is interpreted as "testimony in water."

Cum hoc plane testimonio venit Dominus ad aquam baptismatis, habens quidem testimonium majus Joanne, sed propter infirmas oves, hoc testimonio uti dignatus est in aqua. Unde cum videret eum ad Jordanis fluenta propinquantem, protinus exclamans, ait: «Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi (Joan. I).» Et evangelista dicit: «Testimonium perhibuit Joannes dicens: Quia vidi Spiritum descendentem tanquam columbam de coelo, et mansit super eum, et ego nesciebam eum; sed qui misit me baptizare in aqua, ille mihi dixit: Super quem videris Spiritum descendentem, et manentem super eum, hic est qui baptizat in Spiritu sancto (Ibid.).» Cui scilicet visioni etiam nomen pastoris illius aptissime congruit. Interpretatur enim Hiras, fratris mei visio. Erat quippe Dominus frater Joannis, non modo secundum semen Abrahae, sed etiam juxta cognationem Mariae et Elisabeth.

Nam quod etiam sequitur in historia, quod Judas dedit Thamari baculum suum, et annulum, et armillas (Gen. XXXVIII), quid aliud significat, nisi quod Redemptor noster Ecclesiae regni sceptrum, fidei signaculum, et charitatis vinculum dedit? Per baculum enim regia potestas exprimitur; per annulum, fidei integritas; per armillas, quae in brachiis ferri solent, boni operis exercitium, seu mutuae dilectionis vinculum intelligitur. Et haec quidem ei in pignore dedit, donec mitteret haedum quem promiserat. Ille autem Haedus, videlicet Salvator mundi, qui venit in similitudinem carnis peccati (Rom. VIII), cum venit plenitudo temporis, missus est ad Ecclesiam. Misit autem illum, quia in hunc mundum quasi per manus Joannis advenit. Joannes enim fuit mediator inter Legem et Gratiam, inter Synagogam et Ecclesiam, inter Christum et mundum. Qui licet jam mortuus esset cum Dominus pateretur, tamen recte dicitur ad Ecclesiam illum adduxisse, quia et praesentem ostendit, et baptizando eum, quasi propriis manibus, mundo tradidit. De hoc haedo, scilicet Redemptore nostro, dicitur in Lege: «Haedum sine macula offeretis Domino (Exod. XII).» Ille enim profecto est Haedus, quia factus est pro nobis peccatum (II Cor. V); sed sine macula, quia peccatum non fecit, nec inventus est dolus in ore ejus (I Petr. II). Hunc ergo haedum misit Judas Thamari, quando per praedicationem Joannis, Redemptor mundi manifestatus est Ecclesiae.

With this testimony plainly the Lord came to the water of baptism, having indeed a testimony greater than John, but on account of the weak sheep, He deigned to use this testimony in the water. Whence when he saw Him approaching to the floods of the Jordan, at once exclaiming, he said: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world (John 1)." And the evangelist says: "John bore testimony saying: Because I saw the Spirit descending as a dove from heaven, and it remained upon Him, and I knew Him not; but He who sent me to baptize in water, He said to me: Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon Him, this is He who baptizes in the Holy Spirit (ibid.)." To which vision namely also the name of that shepherd fits most aptly. For Hira is interpreted as "vision of my brother." For the Lord was the brother of John, not only according to the seed of Abraham, but also according to the kinship of Mary and Elizabeth.

For that also which follows in the history, that Judah gave to Tamar his staff, and ring, and bracelets (Gen. 38), what else does it signify, but that our Redeemer gave to the Church the scepter of the kingdom, the sign of faith, and the bond of charity? For by the staff, the royal power is expressed; by the ring, the integrity of the faith; by the bracelets, which are usually worn on the arms, the exercise of good work, or the bond of mutual dilection is understood. And these indeed he gave to her as a pledge, until he should send the kid which he had promised. But that Kid, namely the Savior of the world, who came in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. 8), when the fullness of time came, he was sent to the Church. But he sent Him, because He came into this world as it were through the hands of John. For John was the mediator between the Law and Grace, between the Synagogue and the Church, between Christ and the world. Who although he was already dead when the Lord suffered, nevertheless he is rightly said to have brought Him to the Church, because he both showed Him present, and by baptizing him, as it were by his own hands, delivered Him to the world. Of this kid, namely our Redeemer, it is said in the Law: "A kid without blemish ye shall offer to the Lord (Exod. 12)." For He indeed is the Kid, because He was made for us sin (2 Cor. 5); but without blemish, because He did no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth (1 Peter 2). This kid therefore Judah sent to Tamar, when through the preaching of John, the Redeemer of the world was manifested to the Church.

Sed notandum est, quod misit eum per pastorem suum Odollamitem. Joannes enim profecto, ut diximus, est Odollamites, id est testimonium in aqua. Per quem scilicet Dominus ad Ecclesiam mittitur, quia per ejus testimonium credentibus innotescit. Qui licet amicus esset Sponsi, tamen pastor ejus dicitur, quia dux et magister erat illius populi, quem per verbum praedicationis congregaverat. Unde et discipulos habebat, quos in via vitae instruebat. Sed cum venit Sponsus, non invidit gloriae ejus, sed magis in voce ejus exultavit. «Qui habet sponsam, inquit, sponsus est; amicus autem sponsi, qui stat et audit eum, gaudio gaudet propter vocem sponsi (Joan. III).» O magna humilitas Praecursoris! Non quaerit propriam gloriam, sed gloriam ejus qui misit eum. Non vult Sponsus vocari, licet Christus putaretur (Luc. III), sed amicum se confitetur Sponsi. Stat procul dubio, quia non cadit per superbiam; audit, quia divinis obtemperat jussis. Et gaudio gaudet, non propter laudem propriam, sed propter vocem Sponsi, id est propter manifestationem Veritatis.

Vidit itaque Joannes fratrem suum adhuc clausus in utero, vidit in baptismo, vidit oculis carnis hominem, vidit in spiritu majestatem. Unde et utriusque hujus nominis interpretationem, Hiras videlicet, quod est fratris mei visio, et Odollamitis, quod sonat testimonium in aqua, idem Joannes sub unius sententiae versiculo comprehendit, dicens: «Et ego vidi, et testimonium perhibui, quia hic est Filius Dei (Joan. I).» Veniente igitur Juda ad oves tundendas, Thamar mutat habitum, quia mutat spiritale vocabulum. Thamar quippe commutans interpretatur. Nam de Synagoga fit Ecclesia. Sed juxta litteras, idem nomen amaritudinis manet: non illius, in qua Domino fel ad bibendum miles obtulit; sed ejus potius, in qua Petrus post lapsum amare flevit (Matth. XXVII). Judas autem (Matth. XXVI) confessio dicitur. Thamar ergo cum Juda dormiens, protinus concipit; quia cum confessioni amaritudo miscetur, ad proferendos poenitentiae fructus sancta mox Ecclesia fecundatur. Unde et Joannes: «Facite, inquit, fructus dignos poenitentiae (Matth. III).» Qui nimirum poenitentiae fructus in Hierusalem primus erupit, sicque postmodum per omnem mundi latitudinem pullulavit. Hinc Veritas dicit: «Oportebat Christum pati, et resurgere a mortuis die tertia, et praedicari in nomine ejus poenitentiam, et remissionem peccatorum in omnes gentes, incipiendo ab Hierusalem (Luc. XXIV).» Nam et ipse meretricalis habitus confessionem significat peccatorum; sive quia Thamar ex duobus corruptis componitur verbis, Thamna scilicet, quod deficiens dicitur; et Mara, quod est amaritudo. Bene in ea amaritudo defecit, cum fecunda facta de sterili, dulcem novi germinis sobolem procreavit.

But it is to be noted, that he sent him through his shepherd, the Odollamite. For John indeed, as we have said, is the Odollamite, that is, the testimony in water. Through whom namely the Lord is sent to the Church, because by his testimony he is made known to the believers. Who although he was a friend of the Bridegroom, nevertheless he is called his shepherd, because he was the leader and teacher of that people, which he had gathered by the word of preaching. Whence also he had disciples, whom he instructed in the way of life. But when the Bridegroom came, he did not envy his glory, but rather exulted in his voice. "He who has the bride," he said, "is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the voice of the bridegroom (John 3)." O great humility of the Precursor! He does not seek his own glory, but the glory of Him who sent him. He does not wish to be called the Bridegroom, although he was thought to be the Christ (Luke 3), but he confesses himself to be the friend of the Bridegroom. He stands indeed, because he does not fall through pride; he hears, because he obeys the divine commands. And he rejoices with joy, not because of his own praise, but because of the voice of the Bridegroom, that is, because of the manifestation of the Truth.

John therefore saw his brother while still enclosed in the womb, he saw him in baptism, he saw the man with the eyes of the flesh, and he saw the majesty in the spirit. Whence also the interpretation of both these names, namely Hiras, which is the vision of my brother, and Odollamite, which sounds as testimony in water, the same John comprised under the verse of a single sentence, saying: "And I saw, and I gave testimony, that this is the Son of God (John 1)." Therefore, when Judah came to shear the sheep, Tamar changed her habit, because she changed her spiritual name. For Tamar is interpreted as changing. For from the Synagogue comes the Church. But according to the letter, the same name of bitterness remains: not that in which the soldier offered the Lord gall to drink; but rather that in which Peter wept bitterly after his fall (Matt. 27). Moreover, Judah (Matt. 26) is called confession. Tamar therefore, sleeping with Judah, immediately conceives; because when bitterness is mixed with confession, the holy Church is soon fecundated to bring forth the fruits of penance. Whence also John: "Bring forth," he said, "fruits worthy of penance (Matt. 3)." Which fruit of penance indeed first erupted in Jerusalem, and thus afterwards budded through the whole breadth of the world. Hence the Truth says: "It behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day, and that penance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24)." For even the harlot's habit itself signifies the confession of sins; or because Tamar is composed of two corrupted words, namely Thamna, which is called failing; and Mara, which is bitterness. Well did bitterness fail in her, when having been made fecund from being sterile, she procreated the sweet offspring of a new germ.

Thamar igitur a non cognoscente fetatur; quia sancta Ecclesia quantum ad gentilitatem, in primordio, dum novae fidei semen concipit, non agnoscitur. Unde et canitur: «Populus, quem non cognovi, servivit mihi (Psal. XVII).» Et Isaias: «Ecce, ait, gentem quam nesciebas vocabis; et gentes quae te non cognoverunt, ad te current (Isa. LV).»

Porro autem, quod illi haedus per eumdem Odollamitem mittitur, quid, nisi per Joannem facta peccatorum exprobratio designatur? Quasi enim haedum meretrici portitor afferebat, cum properanti ad baptismi lavacrum, turbae per increpationem dicebat: «Genimina viperarum, quis ostendit vobis fugere ab ira ventura?» (Matth. III.) Requirebat autem Hiras Odollamites a Thamar annulum, armillam, et baculum. Per annulum signaculum fidei, per armillam labor operis, per baculum vero designatur requies spei. Quasi enim fidei annulum requirebat, cum diceret. «Qui credit in Filium Dei, habet vitam aeternam; qui autem incredulus est Christo Filio, non videbit vitam, sed ira Dei manet super eum (Joan. III).» An non etiam ad annulum pertinebat, cum diceret: «Qui habet sponsam, sponsus est? (Ibid.)» Armillam vero laboris exhibebat, cum diceret: «Poenitentiam agite (Matth. III).» Baculi quoque requiem, cum praesto subjungeret: «Appropinquavit enim regnum coelorum (Ibid.).» Ac si perspicue loqueretur: Nolite sub injunctae vobis poenitentiae labore lassescere, sed potius firma spe de regni coelestis appropinquatione animum roborate.

Quaesivit autem eam Judas in bivio, sed invenire non potuit; quia quae in publico, juxta prophetam, et sub omni ligno frondoso fuerat prostituta (Jer. I, II), jam se in domo paterna, sub Christi videlicet constrinxerat disciplina: nec eam peccati reperit exprobratio, quam confessionis mutaverat amaritudo. Viduitatis se vestibus induit; quia praeter coelestem Sponsum, qui pro ea mortuus est, alterum non admittit. Quod autem gemini apparuerunt in utero, duo sunt populi in Ecclesiae gremio per sancti Spiritus gratiam generati. In ipsa vero effusione nascentium, unus manum protulit, et ligato coccino, mox retraxit; sicque ante se nascendi alteri aditum patefecit. Quia nimirum Judaicus populus, qui ad lucem Spiritus nasci primitus coepit, ostendit opera sua prophetarum praecedentium, et ipsius Domini cruore polluta. Unde et Zara oriens interpretatur; quia Hebraicus ille populus prior ortus est ad litteram legis, sed posterior factus est ad suscipiendam gratiam Evangelii. Hoc itaque modo retraxit manum, qui nasci jam per spiritum coeperat populus Judaeorum; et mox prorupit, ac factus est primogenitus populus gentium.

Tamar therefore is made pregnant by one not knowing her; because the holy Church, as far as the gentiles are concerned, in the beginning, while she conceives the seed of the new faith, is not recognized. Whence also it is sung: "A people, whom I have not known, hath served me (Psalm 17)." And Isaiah: "Behold," he said, "thou shalt call a nation that thou knewest not; and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee (Isa. 55)."

Moreover, that the kid is sent to her through the same Odollamite, what does it designate, if not the reproach of sins made through John? For as it were the bearer was bringing a kid to the harlot, when to the crowd hastening to the laver of baptism, he said through a rebuke: "Generations of vipers, who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come? (Matt. 3)." Moreover, Hiras the Odollamite sought from Tamar the ring, the bracelet, and the staff. By the ring is designated the seal of faith, by the bracelet the labor of work, and by the staff the rest of hope. For he sought as it were the ring of faith, when he said: "He that believeth in the Son of God, hath life everlasting; but he that is incredulous to Christ the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3)." Or did it not also pertain to the ring, when he said: "He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom (Ibid.)?" And he exhibited the bracelet of labor, when he said: "Do penance (Matt. 3)." Also the rest of the staff, when he immediately subjoined: "For the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Ibid.)." As if he were clearly speaking: Do not grow weary under the labor of the penance enjoined upon you, but rather strengthen your mind with firm hope in the approach of the heavenly kingdom.

Moreover, Judah sought her in the crossway, but he could not find her; because she who in public, according to the prophet, and under every leafy tree had been prostituted (Jer. 2, 3), had now constrained herself in the paternal house, namely under the discipline of Christ: nor did the reproach of sin find her, whom the bitterness of confession had changed. She clothed herself in the garments of widowhood; because besides the heavenly Bridegroom, who died for her, she admits no other. But as for the fact that twins appeared in the womb, there are two peoples generated in the bosom of the Church through the grace of the Holy Spirit. In the very effusion of those being born, one put forth his hand, and having tied a scarlet thread, soon drew it back; and thus opened the way for the other to be born before him. Because indeed the Jewish people, who first began to be born to the light of the Spirit, showed their works polluted with the blood of the preceding prophets, and of the Lord Himself. Whence also Zara is interpreted as rising; because that Hebrew people rose earlier according to the letter of the law, but was made later to receive the grace of the Gospel. In this way therefore he drew back his hand, the people of the Jews who had already begun to be born through the spirit; and soon broke forth, and was made the first-born, the people of the nations.

Scilicet ut, juxta sententiam Veritatis, futuri essent novissimi qui erant primi; et primi fierent qui erant novissimi (Matth. XX). Bene igitur Pharao divisionis nomen accepit. Unde et obstetrix, eo nascente clamavit: «Quare divisa est propter te maceria?» Omne quippe genus humanum quasi distorta silvarum virgulta adversus venientem in carne Dominum maceriam fecerat: et ne ad peragendum mysterium redemptionis ingrederetur, unanimiter obsistebat. Unde et Paulus: «Nos, inquit, praedicamus Christum crucifixum, Judaeis quidem scandalum, gentibus autem stultitiam (I Cor. I).» Sed gentilis populus hanc divisit, quasi nascendo maceriam, cum per Cornelium centurionem, aliosque primitias fidei, baptismi suscipiens lavacrum, sub Christi titulum convolavit (Act. X). Hanc alternitatem nascendi considerabat B. Joannes, cum Judaeorum turbis undique confluentibus diceret: «Ne coeperitis dicere, Patrem habemus Abraham. Dico enim vobis, quia potens est Deus de lapidibus istis suscitare filios Abrahae (Matth. III).» Ac si patenter dicat: Gentiles populi, qui lapides sunt, quia lapides colunt, primogeniti vobis fient ad regenerationis et novae gratiae sacramentum, quorum vos per legales caeremonias videbamini renuisse primatum.

Haec vobis, fratres charissimi, non exponendo, sed utcunque tangendo, succincte transcurrimus, ut B. Joannem ministrum novae gratiae, et paranymphum spiritualium nuptiarum, ex antiquis etiam sacrae Scripturae paginis demonstremus. Hunc enim insignem atque egregium totius humani generis virum, ad currendam, ut gigas, mortalitatis nostrae viam, quasi conviatorem sibi Salvator adscivit; et ad peragendum redemptionis nostrae negotium, quodammodo ut particeps esset et collaborator, elegit. Unde cum ad eum baptizandus accederet; sublimis autem et humilis servus injunctum sibi ministerium trepidus excusaret, dicens: «Ego a te debeo baptizari, et tu venis ad me? (Ibid.)» respondit: «Sine modo. Sic enim decet nos implere omnem justitiam.» O Domine, dixisti: «Fiat lux, et facta est (Gen. I).» Fiant stellae coeli, bestiae agri, volucres aeris, pisces aquarum. Omnia haec condita sunt ad solum tuae jussionis imperium, omnia disponuntur ad unicum tuae voluntatis nutum, nec ad haec peragenda adhibuisti tibi cujuslibet angelicae potestatis auxilium; quomodo ergo nunc dicis, ad terrenae conditionis hominem quasi coaequans te, et contemperans infirmitati nostrae: sine modo; sic decet nos implere omnem justitiam? Ecce enim quem tu ad cooperationis tuae participium provehis, quem quodammodo ad tuae similitudinis culmen attollis, dicat, quae de te comparatio fieri possit ad se. Ait itaque: «Non ad mensuram dat Deus Spiritum (Joan. III).»

Namely so that, according to the sentence of the Truth, the last should be first, and the first should be last (Matt. 20). Well therefore Pharez received the name of division. Whence also the midwife, as he was being born, cried out: "Why is the wall divided because of thee?" For all the human race, as it were distorted twigs of the woods, had made a wall against the Lord coming in the flesh: and lest he should enter to perform the mystery of redemption, they unanimously resisted. Whence also Paul: "We," he said, "preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness (1 Cor. 1)." But the gentile people divided this wall, as it were by being born, when through Cornelius the centurion, and other first-fruits of the faith, receiving the laver of baptism, they flew together under the title of Christ (Acts 10). Blessed John was considering this alternation of being born, when he said to the crowds of Jews flocking together from every side: "Begin not to say: We have Abraham for our father. For I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham (Matt. 3)." As if he were say plainly: The gentile peoples, who are stones because they worship stones, shall become first-born to you for the sacrament of regeneration and new grace, whose primacy you seemed to have refused through legal ceremonies.

These things, most dear brethren, we have briefly run through, not by explaining them, but by touching upon them in some way, so that we might demonstrate Blessed John as the minister of new grace, and the paranymph of spiritual nuptials, even from the ancient pages of holy Scripture. For the Savior chose this distinguished and eminent man of the whole human race as a companion for Himself, to run, like a giant, the way of our mortality; and He chose him to perform the business of our redemption, that he might be in some way a participant and collaborator. Whence when He came to him to be baptized; the sublime and humble servant tremblingly excused the ministry enjoined upon him, saying: "I ought to be baptized by thee, and comest thou to me? (Matt. 3)" He answered: "Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfill all justice." O Lord, thou hast said: "Let there be light, and there was light (Gen. 1)." Let the stars of heaven be made, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the fish of the waters. All these were established at the sole command of thy bidding, all are disposed at the single nod of thy will, nor didst thou employ the aid of any angelic power to perform these things; how then dost thou now say, as it were coequating thyself to a man of earthly condition, and tempering thyself to our infirmity: Suffer it to be so now; for so it becometh us to fulfill all justice? For behold, he whom thou provest to the participation of thy cooperation, whom in some way thou liftest up to the summit of thy likeness, let him say what comparison can be made of thee to him. He says therefore: "God giveth not the Spirit by measure (John 3)."

Pater diligit Filium, et omnia dedit in manu ejus; sed quia te perhibet nullam Spiritus habere mensuram, de se quid sentiat, dicat: «Nos, inquit, de plenitudine ejus omnes accepimus (Joan. I).» Ac si dicat: Nos vasa sumus, ille fons. Ille in nobis pro sui moderaminis mensura dispensat, unde suae immensitatis incomparabiliter plenitudo redundat. Quae autem inter te et illum sit comparatio, rursus manifeste declarat, cum ait: «Qui de terra est, de terra loquitur; qui de coelo venit, super omnes est (Joan. III).» Quantae itaque tibi subjectionis obsequium debeat, publicis omni populo vocibus clamat: «Venit fortior me, cujus non sum dignus solvere corrigiam calceamentorum ejus (Luc. III).» O beatae humilitatis excelsa majestas, quae dum suo judicio in ima deprimitur, divina provehente clementia, ad coelestia sublevatur; dumque Deo se humiliter subjicit, ad Dei consortium excellenter assurgit! Ille quippe se cum caeteris hominibus perhibet terram, ac terrena loquentem; Dominus autem testatur, nullum eo inter natos mulierum surrexisse majorem (Matth. XI). Ille se ad solvendum caligae vinculum vociferatur indignum, Dominus totum corpus suum ejus manibus subjicit, cum baptismatis lavacrum subiturus accedit. Ille se prophetam humiliter abnegat, quem plusquam prophetam esse, atque insuper angelum Salvator affirmat, de quo et postmodum dicit: «Ille erat lucerna ardens, et lucens (Joan. V).»

Perpendite, fratres mei, quam admirabilis, imo quam angelica vita beati Joannis erat, quam certe magnifica cunctis opinione claruerat, qui cum nullis signum virtutis ostenderet, Christum tamen illum esse omnis populus aestimaret, Luca testante, qui ait: «Existimante autem populo, et cogitantibus omnibus in cordibus suis de Joanne, ne forte ipse esset Christus (Luc. III).» Quae enim religio, quae perfectio, quae denique virtus, quod sanctitatis genus reperitur in aliquo sanctorum, quod in Joanne quasi praerogativae cujusdam non teneat principatum? Sunt siquidem sancti eremitae et anachoretae, sed quis sibi vivendi regulam in silvestri melle, et incomestibili locustarum esca praefixit? Cui porro ad asperitatem vestium non sufficiant saga cilina caprarum? Iste pellicea zona praecinctus, pilis induitur camelorum. Enimvero sunt sancti abrenuntiatores, et saeculum relinquentes; sed iste, puerilis adhuc indolis, cum necdum didicisset civiliter vivere, deserta penetrans, decrevit solitarius habitare; nec dignatus est patri in sacerdotali dignitate succedere, ut verum summumque omnium sacerdotem libera potuisset voce praedicare. Prophetae vaticinantur futurum Salvatoris adventum, apostoli, caeterique doctores testantur impletum; Joannes autem illum praesentem ostendit, cui totius saeculi, et antiqui scilicet et moderni, praedicatio militavit.

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand; but because he declares that thou hast no measure of the Spirit, let him say what he feels about himself: "We all," he says, "have received of his fullness (John 1)." As if he were to say: We are vessels, He is the fountain. He dispenses in us according to the measure of His moderation, whence the fullness of His immensity redundantly overflows beyond comparison. Moreover, what comparison there is between thee and him, he again manifestly declares when he says: "He that is of the earth, of the earth he speaketh; he that cometh from heaven, is above all (John 3)." How much service of subjection indeed he owes to thee, he cries out with public voices to all the people: "There cometh one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to loose (Luke 3)." O lofty majesty of blessed humility, which while by its own judgment it is depressed to the depths, by the promoting divine clemency it is raised to the heavenly things; and while it humbly subjects itself to God, it rises excellently to the fellowship of God! For he indeed declares himself with other men to be earth, and speaking earthly things; but the Lord testifies that among those born of women there hath not risen a greater than he (Matt. 11). He cries out that he is unworthy to loose the latchet of his shoe; the Lord subjects His whole body to his hands, when He comes about to undergo the laver of baptism. He humbly denies that he is a prophet, whom the Savior affirms to be more than a prophet, and moreover an angel, of whom He afterwards says: "He was a burning and a shining lamp (John 5)."

Consider, my brethren, how admirable, nay how angelic was the life of blessed John, how certainly magnificent it had shone in the opinion of all, who while he showed no sign of virtue to any, nevertheless all the people estimated that he was the Christ, Luke testifying, who says: "And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not (Luke 3)." For what religion, what perfection, what virtue finally, what kind of holiness is found in any of the saints, which in John does not hold the primacy as if of a certain prerogative? For there are holy hermits and anchorites, but who fixed for himself a rule of living on wild honey, and the inedible food of locusts? To whom moreover would the haircloth garments of goats not suffice for harshness of clothing? This man, girded with a leathern girdle, is clothed with the hairs of camels. Indeed there are holy renouncers, and those leaving the world; but this man, still of a boyish disposition, when he had not yet learned to live civilly, penetrating the deserts, decreed to dwell solitary; nor did he deign to succeed his father in the priestly dignity, that he might have been able to preach the true and highest priest of all with a free voice. The prophets vaticinate the future coming of the Savior, the apostles and other teachers testify that it is fulfilled; but John shows Him present, whom the preaching of the whole world, namely both ancient and modern, served.

In hoc etiam iste prophetis omnibus supereminet, quoniam illi Spiritum sanctum per aetatum incrementa suscipiunt; iste vero visceribus adhuc maternis inclusus, virtutem Spiritus, gratia praeveniente, concepit; et appropinquante totius Auctore laetitiae, vix dum formati corporis nutibus exsultavit. Alii non coinquinantes vestimenta sua virgines permanserunt; hic autem, ut omnes in se carnis illecebras ab ipsa funditus radice praecideret, et non modo genitalia membra, sed et aures et oculos in vernantis ac floridae virginitatis indeficienti viredine custodiret, cohabitationis humanae contubernia respuit, et prae fervore spiritus ferarum se lustris immersit. Inter purpuratos etiam martyrum choros B. Joannes in magisterii cathedra praesidet, quia pro testimonio veritatis strenuus bellator occubuit, omniumque pro Christo certantium dux factus, vexillum triumphale martyrii coelo primus invexit. Beatus itaque Joannes omnium sanctorum particeps factus est choris, quia nulla sibi virtus defuit sanctitatis: imo tanto insignius inter omnes sanctorum ordines emicat, quanto auctori omnium per incomparabile meritum sublimius appropinquat. Qui in Trinitate perfecta unus et verus Deus vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XXVI.

DE SANCTO PETRO APOSTOLO. (XXIX. JUN.)

Super illud Canticorum Salomonis: Adolescentulae dilexerunt te nimis.

Petrus apostolus, apostolorum princeps et principum primus, hodiernam diem nobis reddidit clariorem. Sacra profecto dies, quia sacratissimo homini consecrata, et illius assignata praeconiis, quem conventus angelicus non mediocriter reveretur. Unus est enim, quem praenobilitant singularis primatus insignia, clavicularius regni coelorum, lingua, fidei fundamentum. Consummatur honor et dignatio gloriosa, hominem in terris positum coelis imperitare, et inter angelorum choros judiciariae potestatis exercere virtutem. Sedet dominator Dominus inter agmina lucidiore luce fulgentia, et de Thronis ad Cherubim transvolans, vices sessionarias intermutat. Quamobrem admiranda quidem sessionum mutatio, longeque rationis humanae superducta conspectibus, cum modo Thronos, modo Cherubim insedisse legatur. Et licet assistant angeli praesidentis imperium exspectantes, et administratorii spiritus assignata sibi ministeria sortiantur; nullus tamen eorum ligandi atque solvendi possidet potestatem.

In this also he surmounts all the prophets, because they receive the Holy Spirit through the increments of ages; but he indeed, still enclosed in the maternal bowels, conceived the power of the Spirit, grace preventing; and at the approach of the Author of all joy, he exulted with the nods of a body scarcely yet formed. Others remained virgins not defiling their garments; but he, so that he might cut off from the very root all the allurements of the flesh in himself, and might keep not only the genital members, but also the ears and eyes in the unfailing greenness of a flourishing and flowery virginity, rejected the companionship of human cohabitation, and for the fervor of the spirit immersed himself in the dens of wild beasts. Also among the purple-clad choirs of martyrs Blessed John presides in the chair of mastery, because he fell as a strenuous warrior for the testimony of truth, and having been made the leader of all those struggling for Christ, he was the first to bring the triumphal banner of martyrdom into heaven. Blessed John therefore has been made a participant in the choirs of all the saints, because no virtue of holiness was lacking to him: nay, he shines so much more distinguished among all the orders of the saints, as he approaches more sublimely to the Author of all through incomparable merit. Who in the perfect Trinity lives and reigns one and true God forever and ever. Amen.

Sermon XXVI.

ON SAINT PETER THE APOSTLE. (JUNE 29.)

Upon that of the Canticle of Solomon: The young maidens have loved thee exceedingly.

Peter the apostle, prince of the apostles and first of princes, has rendered this present day more bright for us. Truly a sacred day, because consecrated to a most sacred man, and assigned to the praises of him whom the angelic assembly reveres in no small measure. For he is the one whom the insignia of a singular primacy pre-ennoble, the key-bearer of the kingdom of heaven, the tongue, the foundation of the faith. The honor and glorious worthiness are consummated, that a man placed on earth should rule the heavens, and should exercise the virtue of judicial power among the choirs of angels. The Lord as ruler sits among the ranks shining with a brighter light, and flying from the Thrones to the Cherubim, He interchanges the turns of sitting. Wherefore the change of sittings is indeed to be admired, and far brought over the sights of human reason, since He is read to have sat now upon the Thrones, now upon the Cherubim. And although the angels assist awaiting the command of the one presiding, and the administrative spirits allot the ministries assigned to them; nevertheless none of them possesses the power of binding and loosing.

Adest Petrus, et ad ejus arbitrium orbis universitas solvitur, et ligatur; et praecedit Petri sententia sententiam Redemptoris, quia non quod Christus, hoc ligat Petrus, sed quod Petrus, hoc ligat Christus. Ipso idipsum attestante: «Quodcunque, inquit, ligaveris super terram, erit ligatum et in coelis (Matth. XVI).»

O quam potens dignitas, quam digna potentia! Judicat Petrus, et Petri judicia confirmat Omnipotens, et est in manu Petri manus Altissimi; solusque ille efficitur familiaris Christi, qui Petri familiaritatem habuerit. Quid est quo, angelorum et hominum agminibus exclusis, solus Petrus in consortium divinae majestatis, et cum Domino residet praesidente? Dulce colloquium, sancta conversatio; concilium speciale Petri et Dei, ubi secretorum indifferentia mortalem hominem Deo copulat et counit. Non ergo mirum si ardentiore affectu diligit Salvatorem Petrus apostolus, cum singularis amor refusus sit in eum, ut et singulariter diligat, et specialiter diligatur. Anima ejus una est de adolescentulis quae dilexerunt eum nimis. Puerilis aetas nondum amori congruit, semilis desiit ab amore. Puer est, qui nondum aeternis studere coepit; senex est, qui coeperat, sed dimisit. Utrosque igitur ille summus amator excludit, et a majestate suae dilectionis eliminat. Sola adolescentia, ardentissimis ignibus incandescens, eclipticum amorem non recipit, sed ardorem sibi vindicat copiosum. Inter adolescentulas igitur, animas videlicet electorum, quae coelesti sponso dilectionem promiserunt et fidem, ista sola dilexit ardentius, et amoris impatiens, ait: «Domine, si tu es, jube me venire ad te super aquas (Matth. I).» Non timuit singularem elementi molestiam, et pelagi saevientis undositas affectum Apostoli retinere non potuit. Sed quid est quod dicit nimis, cum nimis ille diligi non possit, qui toto corde, tota anima, totis viribus praecipitur diligendus?

Tres sunt gradus in amore Dei, quorum ad alterum sine altero conscendere, aut parum valet, aut nihil. Cucurrit eo Apostolus pede velociore, donec in tertii summitate repositum, ad coeleste palatium evolaret. Amandus enim est Deus dulciter, sapienter et fortiter. Sed jam videamus quid sit dulciter amare Deum. Dulcis enim est, et dulciter diligi debet, qui multitudinem dulcedinis suae, vel amantibus, vel timentibus se ministrare non cessat.

Peter is present, and at his will the whole universe is loosed and bound; and the sentence of Peter precedes the sentence of the Redeemer, because not what Christ [binds], this does Peter bind, but what Peter [binds], this does Christ bind. He himself attesting this very thing: "Whatsoever," he said, "thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven (Matt. 16)."

O how powerful a dignity, how worthy a power! Peter judges, and the Almighty confirms the judgments of Peter, and in the hand of Peter is the hand of the Most High; and he alone is made an intimate of Christ, who shall have had the intimacy of Peter. What is it by which, the ranks of angels and men having been excluded, Peter alone resides in the fellowship of the divine majesty, and with the Lord presiding? Sweet colloquy, holy conversation; a special council of Peter and God, where the indifference of secrets joins and unites mortal man to God. It is not therefore a wonder if Peter the apostle loves the Savior with a more burning affection, since a singular love has been poured back into him, so that he both loves singularly, and is specially loved. His soul is one of the young maidens who loved him exceedingly. A boyish age is not yet suitable for love, an old age has ceased from love. He is a boy, who has not yet begun to study eternal things; he is an old man, who had begun, but left off. Both of these therefore that highest lover excludes, and eliminates from the majesty of his love. Only adolescence, glowing with the most burning fires, does not receive an eclipsed love, but claims for itself a copious ardor. Among the young maidens therefore, namely the souls of the elect, who promised love and faith to the heavenly spouse, she alone loved more ardently, and impatient of love, said: "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee upon the waters (Matt. 14)." He did not fear the singular trouble of the element, and the waviness of the raging sea could not restrain the affection of the Apostle. But what is it that he says exceedingly, when he cannot be loved exceedingly, who is commanded to be loved with the whole heart, with the whole soul, with all the strength?

There are three degrees in the love of God, to any one of which to ascend without the other either avails little, or nothing. The Apostle ran thither with a swifter foot, until, placed at the summit of the third, he should fly forth to the heavenly palace. For God is to be loved sweetly, wisely, and strongly. But now let us see what it is to love God sweetly. For He is sweet, and ought to be loved sweetly, who does not cease to minister the multitude of His sweetness both to those loving Him and to those fearing Him.

Amatur in dulcedine, cum amatur in carne; cum nescimus nisi Christum Jesum, et hunc crucifixum; cum tota carnis ejus frequentia frequenti memoria retinetur; et ossa nostra medullitus concutit tantae miserationis dignatio. Cum enim recordamur Regem gloriae parvuli vagientis sustinere miserias, pannorum vilium vilitate devolvi, fatigatum ex itinere residere, Pharisaeorum opprobria, convicia Judaeorum aure patientissima pertransire; nunquid non compungi debemus ad tantae pietatis intuitum? Considera Filium Virginis illitum sputis, lividum plagis, clavis confixum. Attende rectorem coeli stantem in cruce, pallidum morte, carne deformem. Ne pertranseas Dominum angelorum, factum opprobrium hominum, virum dolorum, et scientem infirmitates, virum percussum a Deo et humiliatum, virum leprosum et omnibus expositum detrimentis. Haec recordatio succendit cor, pectus adurit, interiora depascitur. Talis memoria elicit lacrymas, suffundit oculos, vultus humectat.

Circa hunc fere gradum obvolvitur omnis religiosorum instantia, raraque avis in terris est, quae possit hunc transire profectum. Astat enim orantibus vel imago nascentis Dei, vel pendentis in cruce, tenetque mentis affectum incalescens affectio, et ad ulteriora vix permittit excurrere. In hoc gradu Petrus impressus consistebat, cum carnem, et conversationem Jesu Christi tenerrime diligens, Salvatorem etiam a salvatione generis humani retraheret, dicens: «Propitius esto, Domine, tibi ipsi, ne fiat hoc (Matth. XVI).» Cui Dominus: «Vade, inquit, post me, Satana, quia non sapis quae Dei sunt;» culpans consilium, non affectum. Diligebat enim dulciter, non tamen sapienter; quomodo enim sapienter, qui mundi redemptionem et Dei providentiam nitebatur excludere? Sed succenderat cor ejus familaritas dulcior, et verbum de Redemptoris absentia pati non poterat benignitas diligentis. Hic diligitur Deus ex toto corde, cum in corde hominis affectus et dulcedo inhabitet, solumque cor nominis amoris dulcedinem perseveranti stabilitate custodiat. Unde et vulgaris usus obtinuit, ut, cum aliquem ab aliquo vehementer amari conspicimus, dicamus: Ex corde diligit eum, quem scilicet amat, et sequitur.

He is loved in sweetness when He is loved in the flesh; when we know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified; when the whole attendance of His flesh is retained by frequent memory; and the worthiness of such great commiseration shakes our bones to the marrow. For when we remember the King of glory sustaining the miseries of a wailing little child, rolled in the vileness of vile rags, sitting weary from the journey, passing through the reproaches of the Pharisees and the insults of the Jews with a most patient ear; ought we not to be moved with compunction at the sight of such great piety? Consider the Son of the Virgin smeared with spittle, livid with blows, fixed with nails. Behold the ruler of heaven standing on the cross, pale with death, deformed in the flesh. Do not pass by the Lord of angels, made the reproach of men, a man of sorrows, and knowing infirmities, a man struck by God and humbled, a man leprous and exposed to all detriments. This recollection kindles the heart, burns the breast, feeds upon the inner parts. Such memory elicits tears, suffuses the eyes, moistens the countenance.

Around this degree almost all the insistence of religious people is revolved, and rare is the bird on earth which can pass this progress. For there stands before those praying either the image of the God being born, or of Him hanging on the cross, and the glowing affection holds the affection of the mind, and scarcely permits it to run forth to further things. In this degree Peter stood impressed, when loving most tenderly the flesh and conversation of Jesus Christ, he would even withdraw the Savior from the salvation of the human race, saying: "Be merciful to thyself, Lord, let not this be (Matt. 16)." To whom the Lord: "Go," He said, "behind me, Satan, because thou savourest not the things that are of God;" blaming the counsel, not the affection. For he loved sweetly, yet not wisely; for how wisely, who was striving to exclude the redemption of the world and the providence of God? But a sweeter intimacy had kindled his heart, and the kindness of the one loving could not bear the word concerning the absence of the Redeemer. Here God is loved with the whole heart, when affection and sweetness dwell in the heart of man, and the heart alone keeps the sweetness of the name of love with persevering stability. Whence also common usage has obtained, that when we see someone to be loved vehemently by someone, we say: He loves him from the heart, whom namely he loves and follows.

Secundus est, diligere sapienter. Gradus iste multae altitudinis est, et nimis difficilem pollicetur ascensum. Non autem evadit ad cacumen ejus nisi mens mundior, et quae mundi hujus sapientiam sapientia supervaleat angelorum. Non attenditur hic nascentis, vel itinerantis Dei cumulata devotio, sed Verbum in principio apud Deum (Joan. I). Recordare Filium Dei cum Patre omnia fabricantem, creantem angelos, elementa jungentem, disponentem mundum, omnia gubernantem; et cognosce quam excelsior sit ista cognitio quam illa. Intuere ineffabilem ipsius genituram, et genitum gignenti non dissimilem; nec priorem Patrem quam Filium; et tunc intelliges quanta differentia nativitatem utramque disjungat; cum aliud sit nasci in gloria, aliud in miseria; aliud aequalem Deo, aliud angelis esse minorem. Haec est sapientia singularis, supergredi corporis et corporum obstacula; et in illius lucis subsilire splendorem, ubi lumen videtur in lumine, et Deus non serviens, sed imperans demonstratur. Felix anima quae, faeculentae carnis superata materia, in hujus sapientiae lumine requiescit! Vis videre Paulum, quomodo a primo gradu ad secundum ascenderit? Cum dixisset: «Mihi absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi!» (Gal. VI.) scripsit alio loco: «Et si noveramus Christum secundum carnem, sed nunc jam non novimus (II Cor. V).» Hic affectus sapientiae sedet in anima, quae sola rationis capax est; incorporeumque, et incircumscriptum spiritum indefessa meditatione prospectat. Hic diligitur Deus et tota anima, id est ex tota sapientia, qui prius ex toto corde, id est ex dulcedine, diligebatur.

Tertius gradus est, amare fortiter, id est, ex omnibus viribus. Fortiter diligit qui, cum necesse fuerit, pro Salvatoris fide corpus et animam tormentis exponit. Hic est fructus operis, laboris consummatio, probatio dilectionis. De gradu enim dulcedinis ad sapientiae gradum ascenderat apostolus Petrus, cum diceret: «Animam meam pono pro te (Matth. XXVI).» Nihil sapientius neque fortius quam; «Animam pono pro te;» nihil insipientius neque debilius quam: «Neque scio, neque novi quid dicas (Joan. XV).» Profecto jam dilegabat dulciter, jam sapienter; sed utrumque perdidit, cum fortiter non dilexit; cum ad vocem mulierculae Dominum et Magistrum suum celeriter abnegavit. Sed cum mori pro Christo disposuit, dilexit nimis; quia «majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, quam ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis (Ibid.).» Affixus cruci, a fide separari non potuit. Vides ergo quomodo tres gradus iste trinae legis dilectioni conveniant. Itaque amemus dulciter, sapienter et fortiter, ut ad Magistrum Petri intercessione pervenire valeamus, qui est benedictus in saecula. Amen.

The second is to love wisely. This degree is of much height, and promises an exceedingly difficult ascent. Moreover, no one escapes to its summit except a purer mind, and one which by wisdom may prevail over the wisdom of the angels of this world. The accumulated devotion of the God being born or journeying is not attended to here, but the Word in the beginning with God (John 1). Remember the Son of God fashioning all things with the Father, creating the angels, joining the elements, disposing the world, governing all things; and know how much higher this knowledge is than that. Gaze upon His ineffable generation, and the Begotten not unlike the Begetter; nor the Father earlier than the Son; and then thou shalt understand how great a difference disjoins both births; since it is one thing to be born in glory, another in misery; one thing to be equal to God, another to be less than the angels. This is singular wisdom, to step over the obstacles of the body and of bodies; and to leap into the splendor of that light, where light is seen in light, and God is shown not serving, but commanding. Happy the soul which, the matter of the dreggy flesh having been overcome, rests in the light of this wisdom! Dost thou wish to see Paul, how he ascended from the first degree to the second? When he had said: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!" (Gal. 6), he wrote in another place: "And if we have known Christ according to the flesh, but now we know him no more" (2 Cor. 5). This affection of wisdom sits in the soul, which alone is capable of reason; and it looks forward to the incorporeal and uncircumscribed spirit with indefatigable meditation. Here God is loved with the whole soul, that is, out of the whole wisdom, who before was loved with the whole heart, that is, out of sweetness.

The third degree is to love strongly, that is, from all one's strength. He loves strongly who, when it shall be necessary, exposes body and soul to torments for the faith of the Savior. This is the fruit of the work, the consummation of labor, the proof of love. For from the degree of sweetness to the degree of wisdom the apostle Peter had ascended when he said: "I lay down my life for thee" (Matt. 26). Nothing is wiser nor stronger than: "I lay down my life for thee"; nothing more unwise nor weaker than: "I neither know nor have known what thou sayest" (John 15). Truly he already loved sweetly, already wisely; but he lost both when he did not love strongly; when at the voice of a little woman he quickly denied his Lord and Master. But when he disposed to die for Christ, he loved exceedingly; because "greater love than this no man hath, than that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Ibid.). Fastened to the cross, he could not be separated from the faith. Thou seest therefore how these three degrees agree with the threefold law of love. Therefore let us love sweetly, wisely, and strongly, that we may be able to reach the Master of Peter by his intercession, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Sermo XXVII.

DE SANCTIS APOSTOLIS PETRO ET PAULO. (XXIX JUN.)

Hodierna dies, dilectissimi, clara est et solemnis, universamque creaturam suo lumine sanctificat et infundit. Non enim est ignota festivitas, vel alicujus obscuritatis tenebris offuscata, sed ab ortu solis usque ad occasum toti cognita mundo, ipsis etiam coelis clara luce relucens. Duo enim apostolorum principes, Ecclesiae luminaria, martyres summi, legis doctores, amici sponsi, oculi sponsae, pastores gregis, mundi custodes, hodierna die coelestia regna felici martyrio conscenderunt; alter princeps regni coelorum, alter raptus ad tertium coelum; alter Judaeis praelatus, alter gentibus datus; in vita socii, consortes in morte, in corona pares, aequales in gloria; judices orbis, Domini confessores.

Admiranda prorsus dispositio Redemptoris, et judicia Dei abyssus multa (Psal. XXXV), cum illos Ecclesiae suae praefecit, qui sic criminaliter lapsi sunt, ut in peccatorum fluctus absorberentur. Cum intueor Petrum, quem ipsa manus Omnipotentis regni coelestis clavibus investit, cui Pater revelat Filii majestatem, super quem fundatur Ecclesia, cui potestas ligandi et solvendi conceditur (Matth. XVI), qui coelos claudit et aperit, quod cherubim et seraphim habere non legitur, vehementer admiror. Rursus cum reflecto oculos, et eumdem Petrum video a longe sequi Salvatorem, et ad unius ancillae vocem detestari, et jurare «quia non novi hominem,» ipsumque, quem Dei Filium confessus fuerat, trepida fugitatione relinquere (Matth. XXVI, Luc. XXII), timore concutior, dicens mecum: «Quis cognovit sensum Domini?» (Rom. XI.) Cum respicio Paulum spirare minas et caedes in discipulos Domini, vinctos ducere, damnare morti (Act. IX), et in corpus Ecclesiae tota debacchatione saevire, intra memetipsum contremo, dicens: «Nescit homo utrum amore an odio dignus sit (Eccle. IX).» Cum respicio desuper, et video vas electionis portare nomen Christi coram gentibus, et regibus, et filiis Israel, ad tertii coeli secreta raptari, et audire arcana verba, quae non licet homini loqui (II Cor. XI, XII), et in illam ipsam Trinitatem oculos figere clariores, gaudeo dicens: «Hic est vir, qui non est derelictus a Domino (Sap. X).»

Quid est quod sic labuntur, qui praeficiuntur Ecclesiae? Sapientia suaviter disponens omnia, haec ideo fecit, ut in seipsis praedicti principes discerent qualiter aliis misereri deberent.

Sermon XXVII.

ON THE HOLY APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL. (JUNE 29.)

This present day, most beloved, is bright and solemn, and it sanctifies and infuses the whole creation with its light. For it is not an unknown festival, or one obscured by the darkness of any obscurity, but known to the whole world from the rising of the sun to its setting, shining also to the heavens themselves with a clear light. For the two princes of the apostles, luminaries of the Church, highest martyrs, teachers of the law, friends of the bridegroom, eyes of the bride, pastors of the flock, guardians of the world, on this day ascended the heavenly kingdoms by a happy martyrdom; one the prince of the heavenly kingdom, the other caught up to the third heaven; one set over the Jews, the other given to the Gentiles; companions in life, consorts in death, peers in the crown, equals in glory; judges of the world, confessors of the Lord.

The disposition of the Redeemer is altogether to be admired, and the judgments of God are a great deep (Psalm 35), since He set those over His Church who fell so criminally that they were absorbed in the floods of sins. When I gaze upon Peter, whom the very hand of the Almighty invested with the keys of the heavenly kingdom, to whom the Father revealed the majesty of the Son, upon whom the Church is founded, to whom the power of binding and loosing is granted (Matt. 16), who closes and opens the heavens, which it is not read that the cherubim and seraphim have, I admire vehemently. Again, when I turn back my eyes and see the same Peter following the Savior from afar, and at the voice of a single maidservant detesting and swearing "that I know not the man," and leaving Him, whom he had confessed to be the Son of God, with a trembling flight (Matt. 26, Luke 22), I am shaken with fear, saying with myself: "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" (Rom. 11.) When I look at Paul breathing threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, leading them bound, condemning them to death (Acts 9), and raging with all revelry against the body of the Church, I tremble within myself, saying: "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred" (Eccl. 9). When I look from above, and see the vessel of election carrying the name of Christ before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel, being caught up to the secrets of the third heaven, and hearing arcane words which it is not lawful for a man to speak (2 Cor. 11, 12), and fixing clearer eyes upon that very Trinity, I rejoice saying: "This is the man who was not forsaken by the Lord" (Wis. 10).

Why is it that they so fall, who are set over the Church? Wisdom sweetly disposing all things, did these things for this reason, so that the aforesaid princes might learn in themselves how they ought to have mercy on others.

Hujus virtutem misericordiae praesens capitulum demonstrare conatur. «Isti sunt, inquit, duae olivae (Apoc. XI).» Digna prorsus comparatio olivae ad apostolos, nec alia dignior est inventa. Arbor enim ista semper viridis est, et illum excellentissimum olei liquorem effundit, sine quo nec regia, nec sacerdotalis constat auctoritas. Oleum autem quatuor habet: supernatat omnibus liquoribus, illuminat, pascit et ungit. Cuicunque enim liquori oleum superponas, statim sibi superioris loci vindicat potestatem; ita et misericordia Dei omnibus ejus operibus praefertur, Psalmista testante, qui dicit: «Miserationes ejus super omnia opera ejus (Psal. CXLIV).» Miserator, et misericors, patiens, mitis corde, et suavis universis, Dominus praedicatur (Psal. LXXXV, CXIV). Est autem et justus (Psal. X), sed nunquam multum justus legitur in Scriptura, sicut multum misericors. Vis videre quomodo discipuli sequuntur Dominum et Magistrum suum? Aspice quantus pietatis affectus apostolorum principi se infudit, quando circumsteterunt illum omnibus viduae, flentes et ostendentes tunicas et vestes, quas faciebat illis Dorcas (Act. IX). Circumdatur multitudine pauperum apostolorum princeps, et vocibus lacrymosis concutitur viduarum, apostolicumque pectus irrumpit clementiae multitudo. Orat Apostolus ante vultum gloriae, coram Domino majestatis; resuscitatur mulier, et miseris redditur misericordiae propinatrix. Haec misericordia facit Petrum ab Hierusalem in Antiochiam currere (Act. X), ab Antiochia venire Romam, praedicare verbum Dei, subvenire peccatoribus, peccatis parcere, misericordiam superexaltare judicio.

Aspice et Paulum, et intellige quam dulcioris misericordiae cumulata benignitas, totam apostoli mentem vera compassione succenderat. «Quis infirmatur, inquit, et ego non infirmor? Doleo, inquit, et lugeo super eos qui peccaverunt, et non egerunt poenitentiam (II Cor. XI).» Beata anima, quae omnium miserias suas fecerat, ut omnes lucrifaceret. Hoc affectu navigat mare, currit in Hierusalem, lapidatur, verberatur, affligitur; inde currit ad Ephesios, Corinthios quaerit, circuit Colossenses, Philippenses visitat, revertitur ad Romanos, misericordiam spargit, ubique diffundit pietatem, et coelestium seminat semina gaudiorum. Cernis ergo, quia sicut oleum omnibus liquoribus antecellit; et sic apostolica pietas omnibus eorum virtutibus antefertur.

Illuminat oleum, illuminant et apostoli. Recole Actus apostolorum, et vide quanta luce fulgurat apostolus Petrus. «In plateis, ait Scriptura, ponebantur infirmi in lectulis ut, veniente Petro, saltem umbra illius obumbraret quemquam illorum, et liberarentur ab infirmitatibus suis (Act. V).» Oleum infinitum admirabile lumen, et omni sole lucidius, ad umbram apostolici corporis languores fugere, discedere infirmitates, et omnem morborum instantiam inaudita velocitate fugari.

The present chapter endeavors to demonstrate the virtue of this mercy. "These are," it says, "the two olive trees" (Rev. 11). The comparison of the olive tree to the apostles is altogether worthy, nor has another more worthy been found. For that tree is always green, and pours out that most excellent liquor of oil, without which neither royal nor priestly authority consists. Moreover, oil has four things: it floats above all liquids, it illuminates, it feeds, and it anoints. For upon whatever liquid thou mayest place oil, it immediately claims for itself the power of the higher place; so also the mercy of God is preferred to all His works, the Psalmist testifying, who says: "His tender mercies are over all his works" (Psalm 144). The Lord is preached as compassionate and merciful, patient, mild of heart, and sweet to all (Psalm 85, 114). But He is also just (Psalm 10), but He is never read in Scripture to be much just, as He is much merciful. Dost thou wish to see how the disciples follow their Lord and Master? See how great an affection of piety infused itself into the prince of the apostles, when all the widows stood around him, weeping and showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas made for them (Acts 9). The prince of the apostles is surrounded by a multitude of the poor, and he is shaken by the tearful voices of the widows, and the multitude of clemency breaks into the apostolic breast. The Apostle prays before the face of glory, in the presence of the Lord of majesty; the woman is raised, and she who offers mercy is restored to the miserable. This mercy makes Peter run from Jerusalem into Antioch (Acts 10), and from Antioch to come to Rome, to preach the word of God, to succor sinners, to spare sins, to superextol mercy over judgment.

Behold also Paul, and understand how the accumulated kindness of a sweeter mercy had kindled the whole mind of the apostle with true compassion. "Who is weak," he said, "and I am not weak? I grieve," he said, "and I mourn over those who have sinned, and have not done penance" (2 Cor. 11). Blessed soul, which had made the miseries of all its own, so that it might gain all. With this affection he sails the sea, runs into Jerusalem, is stoned, is beaten, is afflicted; thence he runs to the Ephesians, seeks the Corinthians, goes around the Colossians, visits the Philippians, returns to the Romans, scatters mercy, everywhere diffuses piety, and sows the seeds of heavenly joys. Thou seest therefore, that just as oil excels all liquids, so also apostolic piety is preferred to all their virtues.

Oil illuminates, and the apostles also illuminate. Recall the Acts of the Apostles, and see with how much light the apostle Peter shines. «In the streets,» says the Scripture, «the sick were placed in beds so that, as Peter came, at least his shadow might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities (Acts 5).» Oil is an infinitely admirable light, and brighter than any sun: at the shadow of the apostolic body, languors flee, infirmities depart, and every onset of diseases is chased away with unheard-of speed.

An non copiosa luminis immensitas ab ore Petri largius exsilivit, cum ait claudo: «In nomine Jesu Christi Nazareni surge et ambula?» (Act. III.) Respice Paulum totum Illyricum peragrantem, suscitantem mortuos, subvertentem templa deorum et in splendore hujus loci totius orbis illuminare circuitum (Rom. XV). Currit Paulus, et potenti virtute sermonum illuminat quae in tenebris sunt; clarus sermone, opere clarior, miraculorum coruscatione clarissimus. «Habete, inquit, formam nostram, et attendite non solum quae audistis, sed et quae vidistis in me (Phil. III).» Bonus et perfectus magister, qui fidem facit verbis opere meliore in hujus lucis clarissima serenitate illuxerint coruscationes tuae, Deus, orbi terrae (Psal. LXXVI). Commota est, et contremuit terra ad vocem apostolorum, cum in omnem terram sonus eorum exivit (Psal. XVIII).

Oleum pascit, pascunt et apostoli. Epistolae Petri, et sublimis illa sermonum doctrina, nunquid non mirabiliter pascit Ecclesiam Dei? Audi quid Salvator de hac ipsa pastione dicat ei: «Pasce, inquit tertio, oves meas (Joan. XXI).» Pasce verbo, pasce exemplo, pasce oratione. Pasce verbo, ut potens sis exhortari in doctrina sana, et eos, qui contradicunt, arguere; pasce exemplo, ut quod praedicas voce, opere compleas; pasce oratione, ut pro illis intercedas, quorum anima tibi commissa est. Vas electionis Paulus apostolus, vide, quomodo pascit populum Dei diversorum varietate ferculorum: «Lac, inquit, potum dedi vobis, non escam (I Cor. III);» perfectorum autem solidus cibus est, eorum, qui pro exercitatione consummatos habent sensus. Et alibi: «Facti estis, quibus lacte opus sit, non solido cibo (Hebr. V).» Et iterum: «Sapientiam loquimur inter perfectos (I Cor. II).» Vides quomodo se contemperat et conformat, illos sublimi, hos tenera imbuens doctrina?

Ungit oleum, ungunt et apostoli. An non Petrus apostolus ungit omnes, cum dicit: «Vos autem genus electum, regale sacerdotium, gens sancta, populus acquisitionis; ut virtutes annuntietis ejus qui de tenebris vos vocavit in admirabile lumen suum?» (II Petr. II.) Paulus etiam ipse nonne praecipit, dicens: «Si praeoccupatus fuerit homo in aliquo delicto, vos, qui spirituales estis, instruite hujusmodi in spiritu lenitatis?» (Gal. VI.) Oliva semper est viridis, nec frigoris immensitate percutitur; et apostolorum fides inconcussa perdurat, nec unquam tyrannica rabie potuit superari.

Did not a copious immensity of light leap more abundantly from the mouth of Peter, when he said to the lame man: «In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk» (Acts 3)? Behold Paul traversing all Illyricum, raising the dead, subverting the temples of the gods, and in the splendor of this place illuminating the circuit of the whole world (Rom. 15). Paul runs, and by the powerful virtue of his words illuminates those things which are in darkness; bright in speech, brighter in work, brightest in the flashing of miracles. «Keep our form,» he says, «and attend not only to what you have heard, but also to what you have seen in me (Phil. 3).» A good and perfect teacher, who confirms faith by words with a better work; in the clearest serenity of this light, thy flashes, O God, have shone upon the world (Ps. 76). The earth was moved, and trembled at the voice of the apostles, when their sound went out into all the earth (Ps. 18).

Oil feeds, and the apostles also feed. Do not the Epistles of Peter, and that sublime doctrine of his words, wonderfully feed the Church of God? Hear what the Savior says to him about this very feeding: «Feed,» he says three times, «my sheep (John 21).» Feed by word, feed by example, feed by prayer. Feed by word, that thou mayest be able to exhort in sound doctrine, and to reprove those who contradict; feed by example, that what thou preachest with thy voice, thou mayest fulfill in work; feed by prayer, that thou mayest intercede for those whose souls have been committed to thee. The vessel of election, the apostle Paul, see how he feeds the people of God with a variety of different dishes: «Milk,» he says, «I gave you to drink, not meat (1 Cor. 3);» but solid food is for the perfect, for those who by practice have their senses perfected. And elsewhere: «You have become such as have need of milk, not of solid food (Heb. 5).» And again: «We speak wisdom among the perfect (1 Cor. 2).» Seest thou how he tempers and conforms himself, imbueing the former with sublime, and the latter with tender doctrine?

Oil anoints, and the apostles also anoint. Does not the apostle Peter anoint all, when he says: «But you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people; that you may declare his virtues, who hath called you out of darkness into his admirable light» (2 Pet. 2)? Does not Paul himself also command, saying: «If a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of gentleness» (Gal. 6)? The olive is always green, nor is it struck by the immensity of cold; and the faith of the apostles remains unshaken, nor could it ever be overcome by tyrannical rage.

Et si impulsus est Petrus ut caderet, non tamen cecidit, quia Dominus suscepit eum. Stupefactus quidem momentum haesit apostolus, sed statim in virtute fidei rediit; qui, respiciente Domino, flevit amare (Luc. XXII). Et si ad tempus concussus est, non tamen dejici potuit; quia sententia Veritatis cassari non poterat, dicens: «Ego pro te rogavi,» Petre, «ut non deficiat fides tua (Ibid.).» Hodierna enim die crucifigitur Petrus, Paulus gladiatur, et vitam ponunt pro fide Christi, ut non deficiat fides Christi. Isti sunt ergo duo viri olivae, viri habentes fidem, illuminantes patriam, pascentes Ecclesiam, peccatores ungentes. Quod igitur Scriptura haec dicit: «Isti sunt duae olivae (Apoc. XI);» alibi planius aperit, dicens: «Hi sunt viri misericordiae (Isai. LVII).»

Sequitur: Et duo candelabra lucentia ante Dominum. Candelabrum tribus pedibus innititur, et in altiora consurgens, cereum superportat, ut qui ingrediuntur lumen videant (Luc. XI); ita et apostoli tribus virtutibus innitentes, operatione, praedicatione, miraculorum coruscatione, lumen verum Dominum Jesum Christum ingredientibus ad fidem tota claritate monstrarunt. Et attendendum, quod dicit, «ante Dominum.» Hypocritae enim lucent, non ante Dominum, sed ante mundum; ut videantur ab hominibus. Apostoli vero luxerunt ante Dominum, sed non ante mundum; quia ludibria et verbera experti, divinae majestati solummodo placere studuerunt. Quod ipsi sint duae olivae, et duo candelabra lucentia, et ante Dominum, Zacharias propheta manifeste his verbis innuit, dicens: «Isti sunt duo filii olei splendoris, qui assistunt Dominatori universae terrae (Zach. IV).» Sunt enim filii olei, quia viri sunt misericordiae; sunt et splendoris, quia sunt candelabra lucentia; lucent ante Dominum, quia assistunt Dominatori universae terrae.

Sequitur: Habent potestatem claudere coelum nubibus. Serenitas coeli nubibus impeditur, ne videatur; divinitatis contemplatio peccatis nostris clauditur, ne videatur Deus, propheta testante, qui dicit: «Opposuisti nubem, ne transeat oratio (Thren. III).» Nubes opponitur, ne oratio transeat, cum peccata nostra separant inter nos et Deum. Habent potestatem claudere coelum nubibus, id est, peccatoribus, et portas ejus fidelibus aperire. Mira res, et omni stupore dignissima, ad hominum linguam claudi, et aperiri coelestium palatia mansionum. Amen.

JULIUS.

XVII. Sermo de S. Alexio confessore.

XXII. Sermo de S. Maria Magdalena.

And if Peter was pushed that he might fall, yet he did not fall, because the Lord took him up. Stupefied indeed for a moment the apostle hesitated, but immediately returned in the virtue of faith; who, when the Lord looked back, wept bitterly (Luke 22). And if he was shaken for a time, yet he could not be cast down; because the sentence of Truth could not be made void, saying: «I have prayed for thee,» Peter, «that thy faith fail not» (Ibid.). For on this day Peter is crucified, Paul is beheaded, and they lay down their lives for the faith of Christ, so that the faith of Christ may not fail. These, therefore, are the two olive trees, men having faith, illuminating their country, feeding the Church, anointing sinners. What this Scripture therefore says: «These are the two olive trees (Apoc. 11);» elsewhere it reveals more plainly, saying: «These are men of mercy (Isai. 57).»

It follows: «And two candelabra shining before the Lord.» A candelabra rests on three feet, and rising to the heights, it carries a candle, so that those who enter may see the light (Luke 11); so also the apostles, resting on three virtues—work, preaching, and the flashing of miracles—showed the true light, the Lord Jesus Christ, with all clarity to those entering into faith. And it should be noted that it says, «before the Lord.» For hypocrites shine, not before the Lord, but before the world; so that they may be seen by men. But the apostles shone before the Lord, and not before the world; because having experienced mockeries and scourgings, they studied to please the divine majesty alone. That they themselves are the two olive trees, and the two shining candelabra, and before the Lord, the prophet Zechariah clearly indicates with these words, saying: «These are the two sons of the oil of splendor, who assist the Ruler of the whole earth (Zech. 4).» For they are sons of oil, because they are men of mercy; they are also of splendor, because they are shining candelabra; they shine before the Lord, because they assist the Ruler of the whole earth.

It follows: «They have power to close heaven with clouds.» The serenity of heaven is impeded by clouds, so that it may not be seen; the contemplation of divinity is closed by our sins, so that God may not be seen, as the prophet testifies, who says: «Thou hast set a cloud against us, that prayer may not pass through (Lam. 3).» A cloud is set against us, so that prayer may not pass, when our sins separate us and God. They have power to close heaven with clouds, that is, for sinners, and to open its gates for the faithful. A wondrous thing, and worthy of all amazement, that at the tongue of men the palaces of the heavenly mansions are closed and opened. Amen.

JULY.

XVII. Sermon on St. Alexis the confessor.

XXII. Sermon on St. Mary Magdalene.

XXIII. Sermo I de S. Apollinare episcopo Ravennate et martyre. Sermo II de eodem. Sermo III de eodem.

XX. Sermo de S. Christophoro martyre.

XXIX. Sermo I de SS. Flora et Lucilla virginibus et martyribus. Sermo II de eisdem.

XXX. Sermo de S. Rufino martyre.

Sermo XXVIII.

DE S. ALEXIO CONFESSORE. (XVII JUL.)

Hodierna festivitas, dilectissimi, non modo B. Alexii de quo specialiter agitur, nos provocat alacriter celebrare triumphum; sed ipsos etiam genitores ejus ad salutiferae nobis proponit aedificationis exemplum. Nam cum tot opibus et tam incomparabilibus referatur exuberasse divitiis, ut eorum conspectui tria millia puerorum reverenter assisterent, qui et holosericis ornarentur induviis, et aureis se praecingerent zonis, quotidie non cessabant viduis, ac pupillis, et quibuslibet indigentibus sumptuosas parare mensas edulii, cum ipsi semel in die solo pane et aqua essent plerumque contenti. Istis igitur, aliisque spiritualium virtutum floribus adornati, ac piae conversationis honestate conspicui, tales erant, ut eis quoque non immerito congruat, quod de beati Joannis Baptistae parentibus evangelica narrat historia: nimirum, quia «erant ambo justi ante Deum, incedentes in omnibus mandatis et justificationibus Domini sine querela (Luc. I).» Dignum itaque fuit, ut de tam casto, tam sancto, tam denique immaculato conjugali pudicitiae thalamo, tam praeclara soboles nasceretur. Sicut per Prophetam dicitur: «Generatio rectorum benedicetur (Psal. CXXI).» Haec est enim generatio quaerentium Dominum (Psal. XXIII).

Unde vos, fratres mei, vos, inquam, nunc specialiter alloquor, qui necdum spiritualis vitae culmen aggressi, saecularibus adhuc estis actibus dediti, et conjugalis copulae vinculis obligati, pietatis ac misericordiae studiis vigilanter insistite, necessaria fratribus penuria laborantibus subsidia ministrare, castam, sobriam et honestam vitam, in quantum vester ordo dictat, exhibere contendite, ut ad conservandum posteritatis vestrae genus, dignam Deo valeatis sobolem procreare. Quamvis enim vera sit illa prophetae sententia, qua dicitur: «Anima, quae peccaverit, ipsa morietur.

XXIII. Sermon I on St. Apollinaris, bishop of Ravenna and martyr. Sermon II on the same. Sermon III on the same.

XX. Sermon on St. Christopher the martyr.

XXIX. Sermon I on SS. Flora and Lucilla, virgins and martyrs. Sermon II on the same.

XXX. Sermon on St. Rufinus the martyr.

Sermon XXVIII.

ON ST. ALEXIS THE CONFESSOR. (JULY 17.)

Today's festivity, most beloved, not only provokes us to celebrate eagerly the triumph of Blessed Alexis, of whom we specifically treat; but it also proposes the very parents of him to us as an example of salutary edification. For though they are reported to have abounded with so many resources and such incomparable riches, that three thousand servants reverently assisted their sight, who were both adorned with silk garments and girded themselves with golden belts, they did not cease daily to prepare sumptuous tables of food for widows, and orphans, and any needy persons, while they themselves once a day were mostly content with bread and water alone. Adorned, therefore, with these and other flowers of spiritual virtues, and conspicuous for the honesty of their pious conduct, they were such that to them also not undeservedly fits what the evangelical history tells of the parents of Blessed John the Baptist: namely, because «they were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame (Luke 1).» It was worthy, therefore, that from such a chaste, so holy, and finally so immaculate chamber of conjugal modesty, such a distinguished offspring should be born. As it is said by the Prophet: «The generation of the righteous shall be blessed (Ps. 111).» For this is the generation of those seeking the Lord (Ps. 23).

Wherefore you, my brothers, you, I say, I now specially address, who having not yet approached the summit of spiritual life, are still given to secular acts, and bound by the bonds of conjugal union: insist vigilantly on the studies of piety and mercy, minister necessary subsidies to brothers laboring in penury, contend to exhibit a chaste, sober, and honest life, as much as your order dictates, so that for the conservation of the race of your posterity, you may be able to procreate an offspring worthy of God. For although that sentence of the prophet is true, by which it is said: «The soul that sinneth, the same shall die.

Filius non portabit iniquitatem patris, et pater non portabit iniquitatem filii. Justitia justi super eum erit, et impietas impii erit super eum (Ezech. XVIII);» juxta conversationem tamen parentum, saepe proveniunt merita filiorum; ut et honestis progenitoribus proles honesta respondeat, et reproba reprobis in pravitate concurrat. Unde et isti dicunt: «Filii sanctorum sumus, et vitam illam exspectamus, quam Deus daturus est iis, qui fidem suam nunquam mutant ab eo (Tob. II).» Et illis econtrario dicitur: «Genimina viperarum, quis vos docuit fugere a ventura ira?» (Matth. III.) Enimvero si religiose vivitis, si disciplinaliter conversantes, Dei mandata servatis, et filiis vestris praestatis, et vobis; sin autem contra, et illis nocetis, et vobis. Propter sanctum quippe David meritum, cum propter idololatriam posteritas ejus dejectioni esset obnoxia, diutius regium obtinuit principatum. Econtra Jonathas cum et in Deum pius, et sancto Prophetae esset amicus, propter paternae tamen superbiae fastum gladio subjacuit impiorum (III Reg. XVIII, XIX, XX, XXXI).

Ut ergo ad beatum redeamus Alexium, merito talem prolem genuere parentes, ut de sancta radice sanctum germen erumperet, et bonae arboris ramus per acceptae gratiae coelestis incrementa succrescens, dignos generi suo bonorum operum fructus offerret. Sancto nimirum cuilibet viro non consummatae perfectionis repente tribuitur meritum, sed ad hoc paulatim per piae devotionis et specialis exercitii pervenit incrementum; et dum mens, divini amoris igne percepto, per coeleste desiderium in alta sustollitur, ad perfectionis internae fastigium, quasi quibusdam ascensionis gradibus promovetur. Unde vir ille sanctus aiebat: «Per singulos gradus meos pronuntiabo illum (Job XXXI).» De his quippe meritorum gradibus dicitur. «Ambulabunt de virtute in virtutem (Psal. LXXXIII).» De his idem Propheta, dum sanctam contemplatur Ecclesiam, dicit: «Deus in gradibus ejus dignoscetur, dum suscipiet eam (Psal. XLVII).» Nec enim repente, sicut dictum est, ad summa pertingitur, sed paulatim per piae devotionis votum et sancti laboris exercitium humana mens ad virtutum spiritualium celsitudinem sublevatur. Hinc est, quod per eumdem Prophetam dicitur: «Exercitatus sum, et defecit paulisper spiritus meus (Psal. LXVI).» Quid est enim quod ait: «spiritus meus,» nisi spiritus elationis? spiritus carnis? Et quia per occultam gratiam ad amorem Dei temperata desuper mensura proficimus, quo magis quotidie divinus in nobis spiritus crescit, eo magis noster, hoc est, carnalis desiderii spiritus deficit. Qui nimirum noxius, et abominabilis spiritus, quia non a nobis subito penitus amputatur, nec protinus, ut conamur, abscinditur, recte paulisper, hoc est paulatim, defecisse perhibetur.

The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, and the father shall not bear the iniquity of the son. The justice of the just shall be upon him, and the impiety of the impious shall be upon him (Ezek. 18);» nevertheless, according to the conduct of parents, the merits of children often proceed; so that to honest progenitors an honest offspring corresponds, and a reprobate offspring concurs with reprobate parents in depravity. Wherefore these also say: «We are the children of saints, and we look for that life which God will give to those who never change their faith from him (Tob. 2).» And to those, on the contrary, it is said: «Offspring of vipers, who taught you to flee from the wrath to come?» (Matt. 3.) Indeed, if you live religiously, if conversing in a disciplined manner, you keep the commands of God, you benefit both your children and yourselves; but if otherwise, you harm both them and yourselves. For indeed on account of the merit of holy David, when on account of idolatry his posterity was liable to rejection, they held the royal principality for a long time. On the contrary, Jonathan, though he was both pious toward God and a friend to the holy Prophet, nevertheless on account of the pride of his father's haughtiness, succumbed to the sword of the impious (3 Kings 18, 19, 20, 31).

To return, therefore, to blessed Alexis: deservedly did his parents beget such an offspring, so that from a holy root a holy branch might break forth, and a branch of a good tree, growing by the increments of heavenly grace received, might offer fruits of good works worthy of its kind. Indeed, merit is not suddenly granted to any holy man of consummate perfection, but he arrives at this little by little through the increment of pious devotion and special exercise; and while the mind, having perceived the fire of divine love, is raised on high through heavenly desire, it is promoted to the summit of internal perfection, as if by certain steps of ascension. Wherefore that holy man said: «By each of my steps I will pronounce him (Job 31).» Of these steps of merits it is said. «They shall go from virtue to virtue (Ps. 83).» Of these same steps the Prophet, while he contemplates the holy Church, says: «God shall be known in her steps, while he receives her (Ps. 47).» For, as was said, the highest things are not reached suddenly, but little by little through the vow of pious devotion and the exercise of holy labor the human mind is raised to the height of spiritual virtues. Hence it is that it is said by the same Prophet: «I was exercised, and my spirit failed a little while (Ps. 76).» For what is it that he says, «my spirit,» but the spirit of elation? the spirit of the flesh? And because by occult grace we profit toward the love of God in a tempered measure from above, by as much as the divine spirit grows in us daily, by so much more our own spirit, that is, of carnal desire, fails. This harmful and abominable spirit, because it is not suddenly and completely amputated from us, nor immediately cut off as we attempt, is rightly said to have failed «a little while,» that is, little by little.

Tunc autem in Deum plene proficimus, cum veraciter a nobis nosmetipsos defecisse sentimus. Haec autem crescentium insuper virtutum sensim, atque morose per quotidiani profectus cumulum, ad consummatae sanctitatis pervenit incrementum. Electus enim quisque a rudimenti sui teneritudine prius incipit, et sic ad robusta postmodum et fortia convalescit. Quod aperte Veritas innuit, dum in Evangelio dicit: «Sic est regnum Dei, quemadmodum si jactet homo semen in terram, et dormiat, et exsurgat nocte, ac die; et semen germinet, et crescat, dum nescit ille (Matth. IV).» Cujus nimirum seminis incrementa denuntians, addidit dicens: «Ultro enim terra fructificat, primum herbam, deinde spicam, deinde plenum frumentum in spica;» moxque subjungit: «Et cum se produxerit fructus, statim mittit falcem, quia venit tempus messis.» Ecce Veritatis voce per diversitates frugum distincta sunt augmenta meritorum. Ait enim, primum herbam, deinde spicam, deinde plenum frumentum in spica. Videamus itaque Dominicae sententiae hujus exemplum, quomodo per singula verba luce clarius in beatum concurrat Alexium.

Constat enim, quod vir iste mirabilis, sicut praeclara ejus testatur historia, inter ipsa nuptialium gaudiorum festiva solemnia, uxorem, salva utriusque virginitate, dimisit, parentes abjecit, et Romanae urbis habitationem, Edessae videlicet perexilis oppiduli peregrinatione mutavit. Postposuit amori Christi regii generis conjugem, ejusque secutus inopiam, contempsit amplissimas principalis opulentiae facultates. Sicut ergo in evangelica illa sententia quatuor sunt, quae referuntur a Domino; ita nihilominus et quatuor admiranda sunt, quae reperiuntur in servo. Illic enim dicitur primum herba, deinde spica, postmodum plenum frumentum in spica; quarto jam loco falx mittitur, et quod maturum est desecatur. Quatuor itaque sunt, sicut dictum est, his aptissime congruentia, quae in beato reperiuntur Alexio. Primum est, quod mundum et mundana quaeque contempsit; secundum, quod peregrinus, et in omni facultate nudatus, per decem et septem annos in Edessae Mesopotamiae civitate omnium rerum penuriam pertulit: jam vero tertium est, quod domum propriam felici postlimio rediens, durumque certamen aggressus, inter uxorem et utrumque parentem, inter vernaculos diversamque familiam, ut soli Deo fieret veraciter notus, omnium fefellit aspectus. Postremo quartum est, quod illic post alapas ac verbera servulorum, post subsannationes et contumelias irridentium, post cachinnantium ac saevientium plagas, post intolerabiles denique patientissime toleratae calamitatis injurias, tandem feliciter obiit, tantique laboris immensa certamina beato fine complevit.

Then, however, we fully profit in God, when we truly feel ourselves to have failed from ourselves. This increment of increasing virtues, moreover, arrives at consummate holiness gradually and slowly through the accumulation of daily progress. For every elect person first begins from the tenderness of his rudiment, and so afterwards grows strong toward robust and forceful things. Which Truth openly indicates, while in the Gospel it says: «So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the earth, and sleep, and rise night and day; and the seed should germinate, and grow, while he knows it not (Mark 4).» Denouncing the increments of this seed, he added saying: «For the earth of itself brings forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear;» and soon he subjoins: «And when the fruit has produced itself, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the time of harvest is come.» Behold, by the voice of Truth, the increases of merits are distinguished by the diversities of the crops. For he says, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Let us see, therefore, the example of this Dominical sentence, how through each word it concurs more clearly than light in blessed Alexis.

For it is well known that this wondrous man, as his distinguished history testifies, in the midst of the festive solemnities of nuptial joys, dismissed his wife, with the virginity of both preserved, cast off his parents, and changed the habitation of the Roman city for a pilgrimage to the very small town of Edessa. He postponed a wife of royal race to the love of Christ, and following his poverty, contemned the most ample resources of principal opulence. As, therefore, in that evangelical sentence there are four things which are related by the Lord; so no less there are four things to be admired which are found in the servant. For there is said first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear; and in the fourth place the sickle is put in, and what is mature is cut down. There are four things, therefore, as was said, most aptly congruent to these, which are found in blessed Alexis. The first is, that he contemned the world and all worldly things; the second, that as a pilgrim, and stripped of every resource, for seventeen years in the city of Edessa in Mesopotamia he bore the penury of all things: now the third is, that returning to his own home by a happy return, and having attacked a hard contest, between his wife and both parents, between the house-born servants and the diverse family, so that he might be truly known to God alone, he deceived the sight of all. Finally, the fourth is, that there, after the slaps and scourges of the little servants, after the mockings and insults of those deriding him, after the blows of those laughing and raging, finally after the intolerable injuries of calamity most patiently endured, he at last died happily, and completed the immense contests of so much labor with a blessed end.

Cum ergo mundum insignis vir iste deseruit, nonne quodammodo tunc herba fuit? Debilis quidem adhuc per conversionis novitiae rudimentum, sed jam urens per spei coelestis, quod mente conceperat, desiderium. Nisi enim in agro meritis ejus mundus aresceret, non sprevisset; et nisi supernae spei sibi viror inesset, non ad Deum tantopere, dimissis omnibus, festinaret. In illa scilicet haereditate, quam beatus Petrus «incontaminatam, immarcescibilem, conservatam in coelis (I Petr. I),» appellat; et Dominus pascua nominat (Joan. X): herba ista radicem fixerat, atque ideo supernae gratiae viore vernabat. Cum vero jam prolixo tempore in ignotae regionis exsilio perstitit, seseque ad perferendas tam jugis inopiae, et calamitatis aerumnosae molestias roboravit; quid aliud, quam, ut ita loquar, herba tenera surrexit in spicam. Postmodum vero cum per infusionem sancti Spiritus, intimi roboris vigore concepto, paternam domum acerrima et ultra humanas vires gravia certamina toleraturus intravit; quid aliud, quam ad plenum frumentum dives haec spica pervenit? Haec nimirum spica in statum jam tanti roboris convaluerat, ut ex ore servulorum probrosae contumeliae flabra profluerent nec obruerent; de quotidiano conjugis, parentumque conspectu tentationum fluctus impingerent, nec sternere potuissent. Fundata quippe domus erat supra firmam petram (Matth. VII). Et quidem dum paupertas exterior inopem, pannosus habitus et caesaries redderet inculta deformem, quasi viles culmi et aristae steriles videbantur in palea, sed plenum granum latebat intra conscientiae thecam. Illud nimirum granum, quod de semetipso dicebat: «Nisi granum frumenti cadens in terram, mortuum fuerit, ipsum solum manet (Joan. XII).» Quarto demum loco falx missa est, ut spica, quae ad maturitatis plenitudinem venerat, meteretur, cum dispositionis divinae sententia electum suum ab hac vita praecidit, abjectisque calamitatum omnium paleis, mundum, et omnino purgatum in illo coelestis horrei promptuario felici consummatione recondidit. Sic igitur coelestis agricolae disponente mensura, semen surrexit in herbam, herba crevit in spicam, spica prodiit in frumentum, frumentum pervenit ad horreum. Plenitudo quippe virtutum, sicut dictum est, non tota simul, sed per incrementa tribuitur; ut ad eam per diuturnae provectionis accessum, quasi quibusdam magni moderaminis gradibus ascendatur.

When, therefore, this distinguished man deserted the world, was he not then in a certain way the blade? Weak indeed still through the rudiment of his novice conversion, but already burning through the desire of heavenly hope which he had conceived in his mind. For unless the world had withered in the field of his merits, he would not have despised it; and unless the greenness of supernal hope were in him, he would not have hastened so much to God, having dismissed all things. In that inheritance, namely, which blessed Peter calls «uncontaminated, unfading, preserved in the heavens (1 Pet. 1),» and the Lord names pastures (John 10): that blade had fixed its root, and therefore was blooming with the greenness of supernal grace. But when he persisted for a long time in the exile of an unknown region, and strengthened himself to bear the troubles of such continual penury and laborious calamity; what else did he do but, so to speak, the tender blade rose into the ear. Afterwards, however, when through the infusion of the Holy Spirit, having conceived the vigor of internal strength, he entered his father's house to endure contests most sharp and heavy beyond human strength; what else than that this rich ear arrived at the full corn? This ear, namely, had grown strong into a state of such vigor that the blasts of shameful insults might flow from the mouths of the servants and not overwhelm it; the waves of temptations from the daily sight of his wife and parents might strike against it, and not have been able to lay it low. For indeed the house was founded upon a firm rock (Matt. 7). And indeed while external poverty made him needy, and his ragged habit and unkempt hair made him deformed, he seemed like vile stalks and sterile awns in the chaff, but the full grain lay hidden within the sheath of conscience. That grain, namely, which said of itself: «Unless the grain of wheat falling into the earth die, it remaineth alone (John 12).» In the fourth place at last the sickle was put in, so that the ear, which had come to the fullness of maturity, might be reaped, when the sentence of divine disposition cut off its elect from this life, and having cast away the chaff of all calamities, stored him up clean and entirely purged in that storehouse of the heavenly granary with a happy consummation. Thus, therefore, the measure of the heavenly husbandman disposing, the seed rose into the blade, the blade grew into the ear, the ear came forth into corn, the corn arrived at the granary. For the fullness of virtues, as was said, is not granted all at once, but through increments; so that it is ascended to by the access of long advancement, as if by certain steps of great moderation.

Haec plane provectus nostri quadrifaria dispositio, quae ab ipso Domino sub seminis figura describitur, apud Ezechielem prophetam per aquae vocabulum designatur. De viro quippe, quem in excelso monte conspexerat, haec per ordinem narrat: «Mensus est, inquit, cubitos mille, et traduxit me per aquam usque ad talos; rursumque mensus est mille, et traduxit me per aquam usque ad genua; et mensus est mille, et traduxit me per aquam usque ad renes; et mensus est mille, torrentem, quem non potui pertransire, quoniam intumuerant aquae profundae torrentis, qui non poterat transvadari (Ezech. XLVII).» Quid plane designatur in millenario numero, nisi collati muneris plenitudo? Quid hic aqua, nisi coelestis est sapientia? Unde per Salomonem dicitur: «Sapientia Dei erupuerunt abyssi, et nubes rore concrescunt (Prov. III).» Vir itaque, qui apparuit, mille cubitos metitur, et propheta per aquam usque ad talos ducitur; quia Redemptor noster cum nobis ad se conversis spiritalis exordii plenitudinem tribuit, dono supernae sapientiae, quasi prima vestigia nostrae operationis infundit. Nam quasi usque ad talos pervenit aqua, cum nos per acceptam sapientiam desideratae rectitudinis figimus inchoata vestigia. Qui rursus cubitos metitur mille, et propheta usque ad genua per aquam ducitur; quoniam ad hoc jam sapientiae nostrae vigor augetur, ut ad perpetranda pravitatis opera non flectatur. Unde per Paulum dicitur: «Remissas manus, et dissoluta genua erigite, et gressus rectos facite pedibus vestris, ne claudicans quis erret, magis autem sanetur (Hebr. XII).» Aqua vero usque ad genua pervenit, cum nos percepta sapientia perfecte ad boni operis rectitudinem stringit; ut jam noster animus non vacillet ac titubet, sed in bono, quod coeperat, vestigia fixa confirmet. Praefatus etiam vir iterum mensus est mille, et propheta per aquam usque ad renes ducitur; quia tunc videlicet in nobis plenitudo sancti operis crescit, quando in nobis percepta sapientia, omnem, quantum possibile est, delectationem carnis exstinxerit. Nisi enim renibus delectatio carnis inesset, Psalmista Deo non diceret: «Ure renes meos, et cor meum (Psal. XXV).» Aqua ergo ad renes venit, cum infusa nobis sapientia petulantes illecebras, et incentiva carnis exstinguit. Qui vir adhuc mensus est mille, torrentem, quem, sicut dicitur, propheta transire non potuit; quoniam intumuerant aquae profundae torrentis, qui non potuit transvadari.

Clearly this fourfold disposition of our progress, which is described by the Lord himself under the figure of seed, is designated by the prophet Ezekiel through the word of water. For concerning the man whom he had seen on the high mountain, he relates these things in order: «He measured,» he says, «a thousand cubits, and led me through the water up to the ankles; and again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water up to the knees; and he measured a thousand, and led me through the water up to the loins; and he measured a thousand, a torrent which I could not pass through, because the deep waters of the torrent had swollen, which could not be waded (Ezek. 47).» What is clearly designated in the number of a thousand, but the fullness of the gift bestowed? What is water here, but heavenly wisdom? Wherefore it is said through Solomon: «By the wisdom of God the abysses have broken out, and the clouds grow thick with dew (Prov. 3).» Therefore the man who appeared measures a thousand cubits, and the prophet is led through the water up to the ankles; because our Redeemer, when he gives to us converted to him the fullness of a spiritual beginning, pours in, as it were, the first footsteps of our operation by the gift of supernal wisdom. For the water arrives, as it were, up to the ankles, when through the wisdom received we fix the initial footsteps of the desired rectitude. He who again measures a thousand cubits, and the prophet is led through the water up to the knees; because now the vigor of our wisdom is increased to this end, that it may not be bent to perpetrating works of depravity. Wherefore it is said through Paul: «Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight steps with your feet, lest any one stumbling should err, but rather be healed (Heb. 12).» But the water arrives up to the knees, when the wisdom perceived perfectly binds us to the rectitude of a good work; so that now our mind may not waver and totter, but may confirm its fixed footsteps in the good which it had begun. The aforesaid man also measured again a thousand, and the prophet is led through the water up to the loins; because then namely the fullness of a holy work grows in us, when the wisdom perceived in us shall have extinguished every pleasure of the flesh, as much as is possible. For unless the pleasure of the flesh were in the loins, the Psalmist would not say to God: «Burn my loins, and my heart (Ps. 25).» Therefore the water comes to the loins, when the wisdom infused into us extinguishes the petulant allurements and incentives of the flesh. Which man still measured a thousand, a torrent which, as is said, the prophet could not pass through; because the deep waters of the torrent had swollen, which could not be waded.

In quo nimirum, quid aliud nobis innuitur, nisi quia post pedes nostros jam in boni operis itinere constitutos, post genua cordis non jam dubie vacillantia, sed ad incedendum per justitiae tramitem firmiter roborata, post oblectamenta renium, et aestuantis incentiva carnis exstincta, vir quisque perfectus ad tantam plenitudinem contemplationis attollitur, ut dum non potest tam eximiam profunditatem ad liquidum comprehendere, velut excrescentis undae vadum mens non valeat humana transire.

Quae videlicet omnia gestis B. Alexii congruentissime videntur aptari. Nam cum a paternis laribus atque ab hujus mundi vanitate recedens, exsilium petiit; tunc sibi quodammodo aqua torrentis hujus ad talos usque pervenit. Haec aqua usque ad talos Moysi et Josue tunc ascendebat, cum eis vox divina juberet, ut calceamenta de suis pedibus solverent (Exod. III; Jos. V). Haec apostolicis postmodum pedibus influebat, cum eis diceretur: «Nolite portare sacculum, neque peram, neque calceamenta (Luc. X).» Oportebat enim, ut annuntiatores Veteris Testamenti, et praedicatores evangelicae fidei, per viam verae humilitatis incederent, et morticinio tegmine vestigia non munirent, qui vitam populo nuntiarent, sed illud in se spirituale tegmen ostenderent, de quo Apostolus ait: «Calceati pedes in praeparatione Evangelii pacis (Ephes. VI).» Unde per Isaiam dicitur: «Beati pedes evangelizantium pacem, evangelizantium bona (Isa. LII).»

Cum vero S. Alexius per longissima temporum spatia tantae paupertatis inopiam in ignotis finibus constanter ac patientissime pertulit, tunc ad ejus genua torrentis aqua surrexit, quia spe mundi prorsus exstincta, jam in via Domini mentis suae vestigia firmiter et invictissime roboravit: postmodum vero cum intra paternae domus atria degeret, cum carnales affectus undique cerneret, cum parentum necessitudinem, cum certe, quod difficilius et intolerabilius erat, venustam sponsae speciem a quotidianis mutuisque conspectibus vitare non posset, tunc velut ad renes ejus aqua torrentis excrevit; quia sic coelestis sapientia carnis ejus incentiva perdomuit, et exstinxit; sic sancti Spiritus ardor lumbos ejus ac renes excoxit, ut dum vasculum suum quotidianis supernae gratiae fluentis infunderet, carnis exstinctae materies nullum titillanti luxuriae fomitem ministraret. Ad renes ergo beati viri tunc aqua pervenit, quia Spiritus sanctus in eo exaestuans, juvenilis aetatis incendium et illices passionum titillantium motus occulto sui roris madore perfudit; et sic omnem luxuriae fomitem, qui in ejus medullis atque visceribus naturaliter poterat ardere, consumpsit.

In which, namely, what else is indicated to us, but that after our feet are now established in the journey of a good work, after the knees of the heart are no longer doubtfully wavering, but firmly strengthened for walking through the path of justice, after the delights of the loins and the incentives of the seething flesh are extinguished, every perfect man is raised to such a fullness of contemplation, that while he cannot clearly comprehend such an extraordinary depth, the human mind may not be able to cross the ford of the overflowing wave.

All which things indeed are seen to be most congruously adapted to the deeds of blessed Alexis. For when, receding from his paternal hearth and from the vanity of this world, he sought exile; then in a certain way the water of this torrent arrived up to his ankles. This water was ascending up to the ankles of Moses and Joshua then, when the divine voice commanded them that they should loose the shoes from their feet (Exod. 3; Josh. 5). This water afterwards flowed upon the apostolic feet, when it was said to them: "Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes (Luke 10)." For it was fitting that the announcers of the Old Testament, and the preachers of the evangelical faith, should walk through the way of true humility, and should not protect their footsteps with the covering of dead skin—they who were to announce life to the people—but should show in themselves that spiritual covering of which the Apostle says: "Having your feet shod in the preparation of the Gospel of peace (Eph. 6)." Wherefore it is said through Isaiah: "Blessed are the feet of those evangelizing peace, evangelizing good things (Isa. 52)."

But when St. Alexis for very long spaces of time constantly and most patiently bore the penury of so much poverty in unknown borders, then the water of the torrent rose to his knees, because the hope of the world being altogether extinguished, he now firmly and most invincibly strengthened the footsteps of his mind in the way of the Lord. Afterwards, however, when he dwelt within the courts of his father's house, when he saw carnal affections on every side, when he could not avoid the necessity of his parents, nor certainly—which was more difficult and intolerable—the beautiful appearance of his spouse from daily and mutual sight, then the water of the torrent grew as it were to his loins. For so heavenly wisdom subdued and extinguished the incentives of his flesh; so the heat of the Holy Spirit cooked his loins and kidneys, that while he infused his little vessel with the daily flows of supernal grace, the material of the extinguished flesh might minister no tinder to titillating luxury. To the loins of the blessed man, therefore, the water then arrived, because the Holy Spirit seething in him, bedewed the fire of youthful age and the alluring movements of titillating passions with the occult moisture of his dew; and thus consumed every tinder of luxury, which could naturally burn in his marrow and bowels.

Ut autem totum prophetiae hujus oraculum beato huic viro convenienter aptetur, illud etiam ab eo non dissonat, quod postremo jam dictus propheta torrentem transire non potuit, de quo nimirum dicitur: «Quoniam intumuerant aquae torrentis, qui non potuit transvadari (Ezech. XLVII).» De parvis et planis aquis ad intransmeabilem profundi torrentis plenitudinem pervenitur; quia de parva contemplatione, fugaci scilicet, raptimque conspecta, qua vir quilibet sanctus in hac adhuc corruptibili carne perfruitur, mox ut obierit, ad plenitudinem profundae ac perfectissimae contemplationis attollitur, adeo ut ad contuendam ipsam summae veritatis speciem provehatur (I Cor. XIII). Tunc itaque torrens non potest pervadari, quia mellifluae contemplationis aeterna dulcedo nullo jam fine concludi, nulla temporum valet prolixitate finiri. Torrens ergo ille contemplationis aeternae, quae non tunc per fidem quaeritur, sed per speciem jam tenetur, quia nescit transire, nequit omnino transiri; et quia non valet humanis sermonibus exprimi, non potest, sicut dicitur, ab homine pervadari. Hunc sitiebat ille torrentem, qui sub spe certa jam gratulabundus aiebat: «Ego autem cum justitia apparebo in conspectu tuo; satiabor dum manifestabitur gloria tua (Psal. XVI).» De hoc iterum dicit: «Inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus tuae, et torrente voluptatis tuae potabis eos, quoniam apud te est fons vitae (Psal. XXXV).» Ad hujus immensi torrentis B. Alexii profunda fluenta pervenit, cum in paterna domo post victoriae gloriosae triumphum feliciter obiit: triumphum, inquam, quia admiranda sancti viri hujus vita vere triumphus est et nova atque inaudita fere victoria; cumque, juxta Propheticam vocem, mirabilis Deus sit in sanctis (Psal. LXVII), in hujus invicti militis sui spectaculi tirocinio tanto mirabilior exstitit, quanto per hunc contra carnis illecebras, contra fraudis diabolicae tentamenta novo atque insolito martyrii genere dimicavit.

Vetus sane tradit historia (EUTROP., Hist. Rom. lib. II in fin.), quia Romani cum Carthaginensibus navali certamine confligentes, obtinuere victoriam; nec ullus unquam, sicut illic legitur, Romanis gratior potuit esse triumphus, ut qui hostibus suis eatenus fuerant in terrena concertatione terribiles, nunc essent, et inter marina fluenta victores. Victoria igitur illa idcirco magis cara, quia rara; ideo plus gloriosa, quia nova. Sicut ergo navalis ille triumphus, quia novus, gratior fuit Romae; ita profecto beati virtus Alexii propter insolitam novitatem magis placet Ecclesiae.

But that the whole oracle of this prophecy may be suitably adapted to this blessed man, that also does not dissonate from him, which last the aforesaid prophet could not pass through the torrent, of which namely it is said: "Because the waters of the torrent had swollen, which could not be waded (Ezek. 47)." From small and level waters one arrives at the impassable fullness of a deep torrent; because from a small contemplation, namely fleeting and rapidly glimpsed, which any holy man enjoys while still in this corruptible flesh, as soon as he dies, he is raised to the fullness of a deep and most perfect contemplation, so much so that he is promoted to behold the very appearance of the highest truth (1 Cor. 13). Then, therefore, the torrent cannot be waded, because the eternal sweetness of mellifluous contemplation can now be enclosed by no end, nor finished by any length of times. That torrent, therefore, of eternal contemplation, which is not then sought through faith, but is already held through sight, because it knows not how to pass away, cannot at all be passed over; and because it cannot be expressed by human words, it cannot, as is said, be waded by man. For this torrent he thirsted, who under certain hope already congratulating said: "But I shall appear in thy sight with justice; I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall be manifested (Ps. 16)." Of this again he says: "They shall be inebriated from the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink from the torrent of thy pleasure, because with thee is the fount of life (Ps. 35)." To the deep flows of this immense torrent blessed Alexis arrived, when in his father's house after the triumph of a glorious victory he happily died. A triumph, I say, because the admirable life of this holy man is truly a triumph and a new and almost unheard-of victory. And since, according to the Prophetic voice, God is wonderful in his saints (Ps. 67), in the recruitment of the spectacle of this his unconquered soldier he stood out so much more wonderful, by as much as through him he fought against the allurements of the flesh, against the temptations of diabolical fraud, with a new and unusual kind of martyrdom.

Ancient history indeed relates (Eutropius, Hist. Rom. lib. II at the end), that the Romans, clashing with the Carthaginians in a naval contest, obtained the victory; nor could any triumph ever be more pleasing to the Romans, as is read there, as those who hitherto had been terrible to their enemies in earthly concertation, were now also victors among the marine flows. That victory, therefore, was more dear because it was rare; and more glorious because it was new. As, therefore, that naval triumph, because it was new, was more pleasing to Rome; so indeed the virtue of blessed Alexis, on account of its unusual novelty, pleases the Church more.

David sane dum se coram Achis regem Geth, furiosum ac dementem finxit, gladium ejus sapienter evasit (I Reg. XII). Salvator noster descendit in tartarum, non ut illud velut habitator incoleret, sed ut destructor potius et eversor diabolicae nequitiae latebras dissiparet. Sic et B. Alexius, dum paternam domum tanquam retrogradus abrenuntiator ingreditur, decepit mundi principem, omnisque fraudis atque malitiae fefellit auctorem.

Unde novum martyrii genus, novum praebet in admiratione spectaculum. Martyribus enim carcer erat poena, catena pressura; isti vero propria domus auratis decorata tricliniis erat materia tentationis. Illos torquebat manus armata carnificum; istum gravius puniebat conspecta quotidie pietas genitorum. In martyrem quemlibet fremebat horrenda rabies judicis, hunc blanda, mitis atque venusta facies impugnabat uxoris. Upon the martyrs in the hall of princes was urged the penalty of torturers; hic autem in domo proprii juris invisibiliter torquebatur, velut in area tribunalis. Illis fuerat poena supplicium; huic econtrario blandimenta tormentum. Lazarus plane, qui jacebat ad januam divitis, invitus esuriebat, et cadentes de mensa micas, quae tamen sibi minime dabantur, optabat (Luc. XVI); unde potioris procul dubio meriti fuit pauper iste, quam Lazarus. Ille nimirum non modo parum quid accipere, sed et saturari, sicut Veritas perhibet, cupiebat, cui tamen alimenta nemo misericorditer indulgebat; iste vero cum sibi sumptuosa divitiarum omnium copia ultro suppeteret, cum omnis hujus mundi gloria se sibi dignaretur, gratis offerret, imo etiam nolenti se violenter ingereret, omnia repulit, cuncta contempsit, irrevocabiliter aversatus abjecit. O strenuum Christi militem! o prorsus invictum, et nimis insignem coelestis militiae bellatorem!

In Annalibus certe legitur Romanorum (EUTROP., Hist. Rom. lib. III in princ.), quia Marcellus consul, dum imprudens in manus hostium incidisset, et corona circumdante Gallorum, nullum, per quem posset evadere, aditum reperiret, repente in medium hostium ferventissimus bellator immersit, eorumque regem, Virdumarum [Vitromarum] nomine, cunctis inopinata audacia perculsis, occidit; et ubi magna videretur provenisse victoria, si duntaxat immunis aufugeret, inde ultra omnem spem opimi spolii manubias reportavit.

David indeed, while he feigned himself furious and mad before Achish, king of Gath, wisely escaped his sword (1 Sam. 21). Our Savior descended into hell, not that he might inhabit it as a dweller, but that as a destructor and over thrower he might dissipate the lairs of diabolical iniquity. So also blessed Alexis, while he enters his father's house as a retrograde renouncer, deceived the prince of the world, and eluded the author of all fraud and malice.

Wherefore a new kind of martyrdom provides a new spectacle in admiration. For to the martyrs a prison was the penalty, a chain the pressure; but to this man his own house decorated with golden dining rooms was the material of temptation. An armed hand of executioners tortured them; the daily beheld piety of his parents punished him more gravely. The horrendous rage of a judge roared against any martyr; the bland, mild, and beautiful face of his wife impugned this man. Upon the martyrs in the hall of princes was urged the penalty of torturers; but this man was invisibly tortured in the house of his own right, as if on the floor of a tribunal. To them a punishment had been a penalty; to this man, on the contrary, allurements were a torment. Lazarus indeed, who lay at the gate of the rich man, was hungry against his will, and desired the crumbs falling from the table, which nevertheless were by no means given to him (Luke 16); wherefore beyond doubt this poor man was of greater merit than Lazarus. He namely desired not only to receive something small, but even to be satisfied, as Truth relates, to whom nevertheless no one mercifully indulged food; but this man, when a sumptuous abundance of all riches was voluntarily at hand for him, when all the glory of this world deigned itself to him and offered itself freely, nay even violently urged itself upon him though unwilling, he repelled all, contemned all, and irrevocably turning away, cast all aside. O strenuous soldier of Christ! O altogether unconquered, and most distinguished warrior of the heavenly militia!

In the Annals of the Romans it is certainly read (Eutropius, Hist. Rom. lib. III at the beginning), that the consul Marcellus, while he had imprudently fallen into the hands of the enemies, and a crown of Gauls surrounding him, he found no exit through which he might escape, suddenly as a most fervent warrior he immersed himself into the midst of the enemies, and killed their king, by name Viridomarus, with an unexpected audacity that struck all; and where it would seem a great victory to have come forth if he only escaped unharmed, from there beyond all hope he brought back the spoils of the spolia opima.

Sic nimirum et noster iste Marcellus, non jam propugnator Romae, sed sanctae miles Ecclesiae, cum magna non dubitaretur esse victoria, si de tam amplis et magnificis opibus nudus aufugeret, non sufficere sibi visum est, nisi et domum rediens, intolerabilia contra se certamina ultroneus provocaret. Sed ab ipso Domino, qui videlicet auctor virtutum, et dux est spiritalium bellatorum, jubemur quidem cuncta dimittere, non autem adversus ea quotidie, velut manus invicem conferentes, cominus dimicare: Israelitico nimirum populo exitus ex Aegypto praecipitur (Exod. III), non reditus imperatur. Abraham egressus est de terra sua ad Domini jubentis imperium (Gen. XII); sed postmodum nequaquam rediit ad rediviva certamina Chaldaeorum. Petrus per angelum excitatus Herodianum deseruit carcerem (Act. XII), sed non denuo reversus est ad Herodem. Sufficit ergo, si tantum possessa relinquimus, nec superest, ut rursus ad eorum toleranda certamina redeamus.

Igitur B. Alexius cum terrena quaeque dimisit, cum opes omnes atque divitias paterni juris abjecit, supernae jussionis mandata (Luc. XVIII) complevit; cum vero ad propria rediit, abrenuntiator egregius metam procul dubio divinae legis excessit. Et quia mensuram bonam, et confertam et coagitatam in sinum suum electi quique recipiunt; et unusquisque propriam mercedem recipit secundum suum laborem (I Cor. III); immensurabilem hic possidet gloriam, qui non tenuit in labore mensuram. Et qui evangelicam regulam in sui certaminis agone transcendit, supereminens praemium de manu justi remuneratoris accepit. Ipse quippe factus est praemium retributionis, qui sibi fuerat causa certaminis, et qui fuerat auctor pugnae, factus est corona victoriae, Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

* SERMO XXIX. DE SANCTA MARIA MAGDALENA. (XXII JUL.)

Hodie misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi, et multitudo miserationum Domini in peccatricem feminam (Luc. VII) refusa est. Filius enim Virginis, peccatricis, menstruatae manibus attrectatur; Deumque, et Dei Filium mulier infirmata contingit. Tangit pedes mundi, atque mundantis immunda, et ad vestigia Creatoris mulier criminosa procumbit. Transit in affectum cordis praevaricatrix, et redit adcor, atque magnitudinem scelerum lacrymarum multitudo condemnat. Dissimulat pietas tangentis officium, et obsequiorum instantiam remuneratorius ille majestatis oculus felici dedignatione non inspicit.

So namely also this our Marcellus, no longer a defender of Rome, but a soldier of the holy Church, when it would not be doubted to be a great victory if he escaped naked from such ample and magnificent resources, it did not seem to him to suffice unless, returning home, he voluntarily provoked intolerable contests against himself. But by the Lord himself, who is namely the author of virtues and the leader of spiritual warriors, we are commanded indeed to dismiss all things, but not to fight daily against them at close quarters, as if joining hands in turn: to the Israelite people an exit from Egypt is commanded (Exod. 3), a return is not commanded. Abraham went out from his land at the command of the Lord ordering him (Gen. 12); but afterwards by no means did he return to the revived contests of the Chaldeans. Peter, excited by the angel, deserted the Herodian prison (Acts 12), but did not turn back again to Herod. It suffices, therefore, if only we leave what we possessed, nor does it remain that we return again to endure the contests of those things.

Therefore blessed Alexis, when he dismissed all earthly things, when he cast off all resources and riches of his paternal right, fulfilled the commands of the supernal bidding (Luke 18); but when he returned to his own things, the distinguished renouncer beyond doubt exceeded the goal of the divine law. And because all the elect receive a good measure, pressed down and shaken together into their bosom; and each one receives his own reward according to his own labor (1 Cor. 3); he possesses immeasurable glory here, who did not hold a measure in labor. And he who transcended the evangelical rule in the contest of his struggle, received a supereminent prize from the hand of the just remunerator. For he himself was made the prize of retribution, who had been to him the cause of the contest, and he who had been the author of the fight, was made the crown of victory, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ages of ages. Amen.

Sermon XXIX.

ON SAINT MARY MAGDALENE. (JULY 22.)

Today mercy and truth have met each other, and the multitude of the Lord's miserations has been poured out upon a sinful woman (Luke 7). For the Son of the Virgin is touched by the hands of a sinful, menstruating woman; and the infirm woman touches God, and the Son of God. She touches the feet of the world and of the one cleansing, herself unclean, and the criminal woman prostrates herself at the footsteps of the Creator. The prevaricatress passes into the affection of the heart, and returns to the heart, and the multitude of her tears condemns the magnitude of her crimes. Piety dissimulates the office of the one touching, and that remunerating eye of majesty does not look upon the urgency of the obsequies with a happy disdain.

Osculatur Maria pedes Christi frequentibus osculis, et oculis inundantibus vestigia Redemptoris infundit, tergit crinibus, odoriferis illinit, et irrorat unguentis. Videt, et invidet singularitatis amator, et utrumque redarguit Pharisaei jactantia, illum ignorantiae, praesumptionis illam. Sed deliberans providentia suspendit judicium, dum affectat obsequium, et invectivam retinet praeparatam, donec Mariae sacrificium in holocaustum pertranseat. Gaudent angeli super peccatrice poenitentiam agente (Luc. XV), et odoris fragrantia coelestis ille conventus aspergitur, salvantemque et salvandam totam misericordiae dulcedo procingit. Ubi abundavit peccatum, superabundat gratia (Rom. V); et numerositatem criminum praeponderans pietas intercludit.

Quam magna multitudo dulcedinis tuae, Domine (Psal. XXX), in peccatricis confessione! Quam justa reprehensio in Pharisaei superbia et abusione. Enumeratur obsequentis obsequium, et per obliquum tangitur indignantis iniquitas, tota litterali cohaerentia Simonis invidiam impugnante. Et quia ubi Spiritus Domini, ibi libertas (II Cor. III); dimittuntur illi peccata, quae multum diligit; imo immittuntur illi, qui multum negligit. Non erat satiatus ab uberibus sponsae, nec induerat compassionis affectum legem relegens, quae misericordiam nescit, novit justitiam. Lex dura duris, et lapideis promulgata parata percutere, nescia misereri. Lex excludens poenitentiae locum, veniam negans, emendationis ignara. Lex vinum durum, et acidum, de botris amarissimis eliquatum, consecratum feritati, derivatum Israeli, Salvatori propinatum. Vinum, de quo dentes bibentium obstupescunt, non de genimine vitis illius, quod Salvator bibit novum in regno Patris sui (Luc. XXII). Vere meliora sunt ubera sponsae vino isto (Cant. I). Quaenam autem sunt illa? Procedat in medium Paulus apostolus, et ubera felici lacte manantia nobis assignet. «Gaudere, inquit, cum gaudentibus, et flere cum flentibus (Rom. XII).» O quam brevi sermunculo totius religionis depinxit insigne, tam eleganti clausula proposuit pietatem, aequitatem statuit, submovit invidiam. His uberibus mater Ecclesia lactat proficientes, perfectos nutrit. «Gaudere, inquit, cum gaudentibus.»

Facessat hinc saecularis plausus insania, et laetitia mundialis abscedat; quia non est gaudere impiis, dicit Dominus (Psal. XLVIII). Nunquid illorum os gaudio repleri aestimas, qui laetantur cum malefecerint, et exsultant in rebus pessimis? (Prov. II.) Vel illi, qui laudibus adulatoris rapiuntur, divinae jubilationis agnovere laetitiam? Nunquid qui vestiuntur purpura et bysso, et epulantur quotidie splendide (Luc. XVI), gaudium et laetitiam obtinebunt?

Mary kisses the feet of Christ with frequent kisses, and with inundating eyes bedews the footsteps of the Redeemer, wipes them with her hair, anoints them with odoriferous things, and sprinkles them with ointments. The lover of singularity sees, and envies, and the boastfulness of the Pharisee rebukes both, him for ignorance, her for presumption. But deliberating providence suspends judgment, while it affects the obsequy, and retains the prepared invective, until the sacrifice of Mary passes into a holocaust. The angels rejoice over the sinner doing penance (Luke 15), and that heavenly convention is sprinkled with the fragrance of the odor, and the sweetness of mercy girds both the savior and the one to be saved. Where sin abounded, grace superabounds (Rom. 5); and preponderating piety shuts out the numerosity of crimes.

How great is the multitude of thy sweetness, O Lord (Ps. 30), in the confession of the sinful woman! How just the reprehension in the Pharisee's pride and abuse. The obsequy of the submissive one is enumerated, and the iniquity of the indignant one is touched indirectly, the whole literal coherence impugning the envy of Simon. And because where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Cor. 3); sins are forgiven her, who loves much; rather they are cast upon him, who neglects much. He was not satisfied from the breasts of the spouse, nor had he put on the affection of compassion rereading the law, which knows not mercy, knows justice. A hard law promulgated for the hard and stony, ready to strike, knowing not how to pity. A law excluding the place of penance, denying pardon, ignorant of emendation. A law of hard and acid wine, expressed from most bitter clusters, consecrated to ferocity, derived to Israel, offered to the Savior to drink. Wine, from which the teeth of those drinking are set on edge, not from the offspring of that vine, which the Savior drinks new in the kingdom of his Father (Luke 22). Truly better are the breasts of the spouse than this wine (Cant. 1). But what are those? Let the apostle Paul come forward into the midst, and assign to us the breasts flowing with happy milk. «To rejoice,» he says, «with those rejoicing, and to weep with those weeping (Rom. 12).» O how in a very brief little sermon he depicted the ensign of all religion, in such an elegant clause he proposed piety, established equity, removed envy. With these breasts mother Church suckles those progressing, nourishes the perfect. «To rejoice,» he says, «with those rejoicing.»

Let the insanity of secular applause depart hence, and let worldly joy recede; because there is no rejoicing for the impious, says the Lord (Isa. 48). Dost thou think the mouth of those is filled with joy, who rejoice when they have done evil, and exult in the worst things? (Prov. 2.) Or have they, who are carried away by the praises of a flatterer, known the joy of divine jubilation? Will they who are clothed in purple and fine linen, and feast sumptuously every day (Luke 16), obtain joy and gladness?

Absit, ut in terra suaviter viventium, gaudiorum inveniatur materia, cum tantis alternationibus tanta mundi facies immutetur; ut elevans allidatur, et respiret allisus. Sed est gaudium continua sui jucunditate firmissimum, quod perfectus animus de secura sibi conscientia pollicetur. Mens enim a mundi hujus aspergine pure presseque detersa, et in divinae contemplationis acumen totum desiderii sui figens affectum, gaudens, gaudet in Domino, et exsultat anima sua in Deo suo (Isa. LXI). Tal alma minas aspernatur, nescit timorem, spem falsam eludit, et omnium scandalorum immunis, in pace in idipsum dormiens, requiescit (Psal. IV). «Pax multa diligentibus legem tuam,» ait justus, «et non est illis scandalum (Psal. CXVIII).» Noverat enim, quia lictores non persequuntur martyres, sed coronant. Cum hujusmodi gaudentibus gaudet Apostolus (Rom. XII), et, ut abundantius gaudeant, tota securitate promittit. Hoc gaudium plenum, et certum est, tantoque certius idem, quanto vicinius circa identitatem imprimitur. Haec est mamilla congratulationis, de qua lac exhortationis effunditur, quo nutriuntur perfecti (Isa. LXVI), ut cum avulsi fuerint a lacte isto, epulentur ab introitu gloriae Dei.

Secunda est, flere cum flentibus. Nunquid Apostolus praecipit flere rerum amissionem, intermissionem voluptatum, filiorum mortes, morborum instantiam, gravitatem inopiae, potentiam fortioris? Absit. Plorandi enim sunt, qui taliter plorant. Religiosa enim tristitia, aut alienum peccatum luget, aut proprium. Beati quorum luctus in hac intentione versatur, quia consolatoriam possunt exspectare dulcedinem. Quam leni et dulcissimo spiritu imbibitus est spiritus illius, qui novit in spiritu lenitatis peccantes instruere, suspendere vindictam, et affectuosis officiis in viscerare sibi peccatorem, donec vitae reddatur. De hac compassionis mamilla lac consolationis effunditur, et hoc lacte pascit Apostolus illos qui solido cibo vesci non possunt (I Cor. III). Amator innocentiae, pacis amicus, patientibus compatiens, et congaudens gaudentibus, perfectionis metam, cursu consummato, contingit. Haec sunt verba lacteis irrorata liquoribus, meliora vino, melle dulciora, misericordiam sonantia, redolentia pietatem. «Fragrantia, inquit, unguentis optimis (Cant. I).» Digna prorsus ubera, de quibus eliquatur unguentorum infinitas, odorata diffluxione, civitatem Dei viventis circumquaque respergens. Haec sunt unguenta, quae regina Saba attulit in Hierusalem, de quibus dicit Scriptura: «Non sunt allata ultra aromata, tam optima, quam ea quae dedit regina Saba Salomoni (III Reg. X).»

Far be it that in the land of those living sweetly, the material of joys should be found, when the face of the world is changed by such great alternations; so that he who is elevated may be dashed down, and he who is dashed down may breathe again. But there is a joy most firm in the continual pleasantness of itself, which a perfect mind promises to itself from a secure conscience. For a mind purely and closely wiped clean from the sprinkling of this world, and fixing the whole affection of its desire in the sharpness of divine contemplation, rejoicing, rejoices in the Lord, and its soul exults in its God (Isa. 61). Such a soul spurns threats, knows no fear, eludes false hope, and immune from all scandals, sleeping in peace in that very thing, it rests (Ps. 4). «Much peace to them that love thy law,» says the just man, «and there is no scandal to them (Ps. 118).» For he knew that lictors do not persecute martyrs, but crown them. With those rejoicing in this way the Apostle rejoices (Rom. 12), and that they may rejoice more abundantly, he promises with all security. This joy is full and certain, and it is the more certain as it is imprinted more closely around identity. This is the breast of congratulation, from which the milk of exhortation is poured out, by which the perfect are nourished (Isa. 66), so that when they shall have been withdrawn from this milk, they may feast from the entrance of the glory of God.

The second is, to weep with those weeping. Does the Apostle command to weep for the loss of things, the intermission of pleasures, the deaths of children, the urgency of diseases, the gravity of penury, the power of a stronger one? Far be it. For they are to be bewept, who weep in such a way. For religious sadness either mourns another's sin, or its own. Blessed are they whose mourning is occupied in this intention, because they can expect consolatory sweetness. With how mild and sweetest a spirit is his spirit imbued, who knows how to instruct those sinning in the spirit of gentleness, to suspend vengeance, and by affectionate offices to incorporate the sinner into his own bowels, until he be restored to life. From this breast of compassion the milk of consolation is poured out, and with this milk the Apostle feeds those who cannot eat solid food (1 Cor. 3). The lover of innocence, the friend of peace, compassionating those suffering, and conrejoicing with those rejoicing, touches the goal of perfection, his course being consummated. These are words bedewed with milky liquids, better than wine, sweeter than honey, sounding of mercy, redolent of piety. «Fragrant,» he says, «with the best ointments (Cant. 1).» Breasts truly worthy, from which an infinity of ointments is expressed, with an odorous flowing, sprinkling the city of the living God on every side. These are the ointments which the queen of Sheba brought to Jerusalem, of which the Scripture says: «There were no spices brought any more so good, as those which the queen of Sheba gave to Solomon (3 Kings 10).»

Quam excellenter apposuit optima spiritus ille subtilis, qui totam sibi libri hujus rapit possessionem. Est enim unguentum bonum, quod Maria pedibus Salvatoris infudit (Luc. VII). Est et melius, quod eadem, si tamen eadem, super caput recumbentis effudit (Joan. XII). Est et optimum, quod et ipsa praeparavit toti corpori Christi (Marc. XVI). Primum unguentum contritionis est, de recordatione peccatorum, de spiritu contrito et contribulato descendens. Hoc infunduntur pedes illius qui ambulat super pennas ventorum (Psal. XVII). Hic adorat Maria in loco, ubi steterunt pedes ejus. Steterunt, inquam, quia validissima amoris manu pedem utrumque retinuit, donec utrumque perungeret et audiret criminum remissionem, dimissionem in pace: «Remittuntur, inquit, tibi peccata, et vade in pace (Luc. VII).» Magnam prorsus miseriam magna misericordia diluit et abstergit; et hoc quidem festinanter, quia sine ullo intervallo conjunguntur et lacrymae peccatricis, et indulgentia Salvatoris. Remittuntur peccata, et in pace dimittitur, ut de praeterito non sit sollicita, secura de futuro.

Pedes isti sunt misericordia, et judicium, quorum alterum sine altero osculari, vel temeraria securitas est, vel desperatio fugienda. Quis enim Dei misericordiam indesinenter attendens, non statim tepidioris vitae quietem exoptet? Cum enim recogitat universitatis Dominum, formam servi pro servis suscipere, triginta et tribus annis operari salutem nostram in medio terrae hujus, capi, ligari, lanceari, crucifigi et hoc totum pati pro filiis hominum, statim deceptoria spe sibi blanditur et alludit, gaudet obversari misericordia et miserationibus, judicium nescit, ignorat justitiam, et punienda aestimat non puniri. Fallitur, qui sic osculatur misericordiae pedem, ut pedem judicii non attendat, qui totum de misericordis pietate praesumit; hoc solum ad salutem sufficere credens, quod credit. Rursus cum abducit os, et judicii pedem crebrioribus osculis intertangit, subcutitur carnis animaeque substantia, et utriusque hominis statum vehementior aura percellit. Horrendum est enim in manus Dei viventis incidere (Hebr. X), offendere Creatorem, nescire Dominum, recalcitrare Dominantis imperio, qui habet potestatem corpus et animam mittere in gehennam (Matth. X). Terribilis certe, sicut ait Apostolus, quaedam exspectatio judicii (Hebr. X), quando ignis in conspectu ejus exardescet (Psal. XLIX), et virtutes coelorum movebuntur (Luc. XXI), et vacillantibus conscientiis latitudinem mundi validissimus ignis aduret. Nihil prorsus terribilius, quam vedere latronis officinam plenam sanguine, cumulatam opprobriis, tormentis undantem. Quis haec diutius cogitans non statim contremiscat, et in desperationis rotetur abyssum? Non est igitur huic pedi morosus incumbendum, ne pietatis intuitum ferocia judicantis occludat.

How excellently that subtle spirit, who takes total possession of this book for himself, has set forth the best things. For there is a good ointment, which Mary poured upon the feet of the Savior (Luke 7). There is also a better one, which the same woman —if indeed it was the same—poured upon the head of him as he reclined (John 12). And there is the best, which she herself prepared for the whole body of Christ (Mark 16). The first is the ointment of contrition, descending from the remembrance of sins, from a contrite and humbled spirit. With this are anointed the feet of him who walks upon the wings of the winds (Ps. 17). Here Mary adores in the place where his feet have stood. They stood, I say, because with a most powerful hand of love she held back both feet, until she anointed both and heard the remission of her crimes, her dismissal in peace: "Thy sins," he said, "are forgiven thee, and go in peace (Luke 7)." A great mercy indeed washed and wiped away a great misery; and this indeed hastily, because the tears of the female sinner and the indulgence of the Savior are joined without any interval. Sins are forgiven, and she is dismissed in peace, so that she may not be solicitous concerning the past, but secure concerning the future.

These feet are mercy and judgment, to kiss one of which without the other is either rash security or a despair to be avoided. For who, incessantly attending to the mercy of God, would not immediately long for the rest of a more lukewarm life? For when he reflects that the Lord of the universe took the form of a servant for servants, that for thirty and three years he worked our salvation in the midst of this earth, was captured, bound, pierced with a lance, crucified, and suffered all this for the sons of men, immediately he flatters and alludes to himself with a deceptive hope; he rejoices to be occupied with mercy and commiserations, he knows not judgment, he ignores justice, and thinks that things to be punished are not punished. He is deceived, who so kisses the foot of mercy that he does not attend to the foot of judgment, who presumes everything from the piety of the Merciful one; believing this alone to suffice for salvation, that he believes. Again, when he withdraws his mouth, and touches the foot of judgment with more frequent kisses, the substance of flesh and soul is shaken, and a more vehement breeze strikes the state of both men. For it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10), to offend the Creator, to be ignorant of the Lord, to kick back against the command of the Ruler, who has power to cast body and soul into hell (Matt. 10). Terrible certainly, as the Apostle says, is a certain expectation of judgment (Heb. 10), when a fire shall burn in his sight (Ps. 49), and the powers of the heavens shall be moved (Luke 21), and a most powerful fire shall burn the breadth of the world for wavering consciences. Nothing is more terrible than to see the workshop of the robber full of blood, heaped with reproaches, overflowing with torments. Who, thinking on these things for a long time, would not immediately tremble, and be whirled into the abyss of despair? Therefore one must not lean morosely upon this foot, lest the ferocity of the one judging shut out the intuition of piety.

Utrumque igitur inungat pedem animae poenitentis affectus, et nunc misericordiam amplectens, nunc judicium osculans, contribulati spiritus offerat holocaustum.

Vide Mariam judicii pedem fortiter attendentem, dum nobilis et lasciva mulier convivantium faciem non attendit, sed extenso corpore provolvitur pedibus majestatis, doloris plena, timoris impatiens, compunctionis jaculo vulnerata; sed et misericordiae pedem labiis impressioribus osculatur, in cujus spe firmiter inhaeret vestigiis accumbentis, donec audiat: «Remittuntur tibi peccata tua (Luc. VII).» Sane pretiosum unguentum, quo non solum terrena domus, sed etiam coelestis aspergitur. Vilissimae autem sunt species, de quibus conficitur, et magna eorum copia intra nostros hortulos poterit inveniri. Peccata igitur nostra plantata in conscientiis nostris, quorum numerositas prae multitudine numerari non potest, species ejus sunt. Ipsa igitur in mortariolo poenitentiae macerationis pistillo contusa, et respersa discretionis oleo, doloris igne supposito, et in aheno disciplinae concocta, unguentum exhibet pretiosum, et acceptum pedibus Salvatoris. Compendiose autem illud confecimus, sapienti rerum occasionem penitus relinquentes. Et licet materia videatur indignior, interim tamen bonum est unguentum istud quod domum replet, penetrat coelos, angelos laetificat, et beatae civitati laetitiam refundit et gaudium. Hoc est sacrificium justitiae, quia sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus (Psal. L).

Secundum unguentum est devotionis de recordatione beneficiorum Dei. Prorsus dignissima hujus unguenti compositio, et in istius comparatione prioris est conspersio vilipendenda. Ejus enim species de coelesti paradiso allatae sunt, et in terra filiorum hominum nequeunt inveniri. Virtutes enim divinitus collatae, et in mortariolo cogitationis, pistillo diligentissimae meditationis intritae, et exsultationis oleo superfusae, suffuso igne justitiae, et humilitatis aheno decoctae, unguentum faciunt et odore, et virtute mirabile, quod solum super caput Domini recumbentis possit effundi et exhiberi reverentiae majestatis. Sed et hoc recollegimus breviter, illis, qui multa de paucis exculpere cognoverunt, verborum multitudinem reservantes. Notanda tamen utriusque differentia, et secundi sublimitas attendenda; quia illud est Deo sacrificium spiritus contribulatus (Psal. L), et istud sacrificium laudis (Psal. XLIX), quod honorat Deum. Pedes igitur ungimus Redemptoris, cum de peccatis compungimur; ungimus caput, cum de collatis virtutibus virtutum largitori gratias cumulamus. Interstitii tamen morositas inter pedes esse debet, et caput; quia profecto difficillimus et praesumptuosus saltus est, a vestigiis ad verticem Domini transvolare.

Therefore let the affection of the penitent soul anoint both feet, and now embracing mercy, now kissing judgment, let it offer the holocaust of a humbled spirit.

See Mary strongly attending to the foot of judgment, while the noble and lascivious woman does not attend to the face of those feasting, but with her body extended is prostrated at the feet of majesty, full of grief, impatient of fear, wounded by the dart of compunction; but she also kisses the foot of mercy with more pressed lips, in the hope of which she firmly clings to the footsteps of him reclining, until she hears: "Thy sins are forgiven thee (Luke 7)." Truly a precious ointment, with which not only the earthly house, but also the heavenly is sprinkled. Most vile, however, are the species from which it is composed, and a great abundance of them can be found within our little gardens. Our sins, therefore, planted in our consciences, whose number cannot be counted because of their multitude, are its species. Therefore, these being bruised in the mortar of penance with the pestle of maceration, and sprinkled with the oil of discretion, with the fire of grief placed beneath, and cooked in the cauldron of discipline, it exhibits a precious ointment, and accepted at the feet of the Savior. We have composed it briefly, leaving the occasion of things entirely to the wise. And although the material may seem rather unworthy, meanwhile however that ointment is good which fills the house, penetrates the heavens, gladdens the angels, and pours back gladness and joy to the blessed city. This is the sacrifice of justice, because a humbled spirit is a sacrifice to God (Ps. 50).

The second ointment is that of devotion from the remembrance of the benefits of God. Altogether most worthy is the composition of this ointment, and in comparison of this the former sprinkling is to be held of little value. For its species were brought from the heavenly paradise, and cannot be found in the land of the sons of men. For the virtues collated divinely, and rubbed in the mortar of thought with the pestle of most diligent meditation, and poured over with the oil of exultation, with the fire of justice suffused, and cooked in the cauldron of humility, make an ointment wonderful both in odor and in virtue, which alone can be poured out upon the head of the Lord as he reclines and exhibited to the reverence of majesty. But this also we have recollected briefly, reserving the multitude of words for those who have learned to carve much from little. Yet the difference of both is to be noted, and the sublimity of the second to be attended to; because that is to God a sacrifice of a humbled spirit (Ps. 50), and this a sacrifice of praise (Ps. 49), which honors God. Therefore we anoint the feet of the Redeemer when we are pricked by sins; we anoint the head when we heap up thanks for the collated virtues to the giver of virtues. Yet there ought to be a morosity of interval between the feet and the head; because indeed it is a most difficult and presumptuous leap to fly across from the footsteps to the crown of the Lord.

Neque enim eadem, quae unxit pedes, unxit caput; cum illa meretrix, haec nihil horum fecisse legatur, secundum illud: «Verte impios et non erunt (Prov. XII).» Unxit ergo Maria sanctum Dei verticem, profecto jam dilecta, jam familiaris effecta, longeque peccatricis illius evoluta contagiis, quam infelix ille septenarius confundebat.

Porro si duo praemissa unguenta tantae dignitatis sunt, ut alterum pedibus, alterum capiti complaceat dominantis; illud tertium, quod optimum est et superexcellens, ubinam invenire poterimus? Sed absit, ut sponsa Veritatis a veritate dissentiat; et tale aliquid habere se jactitet, quod habere non possit. Est ergo tertium pietatis unguentum, quod est super omnia aromata, morbis omnibus et periculis salutare, quodque nulli unquam pesti inveniatur inefficax. De ipso namque sic legitur: «Maria Magdalene, et Maria Jacobi, et Salome emerunt aromata, ut venientes ungerent Jesum (Marc. XVI).» Videsne in prima capituli fronte propositum, quod non una, vel duae, sed tres vix sufficiunt ad emendum tantae compositionis unguentum? Intelligis, quia non pedes, aut caput, sed totum crucifixi corpus sibi vindicat ista confectio? Confectio sine dubio pretiosa, quae toti sufficiat corpori Creatoris? Et attende, quia unguentum pedibus infusum adeo dignissima lenitate suscepit, ut Pharisaeum murmurantem parabolica prolixitate convinceret, et retorto sugillaret exemplo (Luc. VII). Sed et de refuso super caput ejus unguento discipulos indignantes coarguit, bonum mulieris opus esse protestans, et tumidam eorum animositatem verbis compescuit moderatis. Hoc vero tam salubre, tamque mirificum in mortuo corpore suo voluit expendi, quod vivo utique reservabat. Duo enim corpora habet Christus, unum, quod suscepit in Virgine; alterum Ecclesiae, quod carius habet benignitas Redimentis. Denique illud pro isto morti exposuit, et tormentis, addictus cruci, vinctus cum sceleratis, morte turpissima condemnatus. Poterimusne tam salubrem confectionem conficere? Universae miserorum miseriae tam animarum, quam corporum, oculo pietatis inspectae, species ejus sunt. Istae igitur in mortariolo largitatis, dulcedinis pistillo confractae, et delinitae charitatis oleo, succenso compassionis igne, et in aheno perseverantiae despumatae, unguentum faciunt ipsis etiam angelis admirandum.

For neither did the same woman who anointed the feet, anoint the head; since the former was a harlot, the latter is read to have done none of these things, according to that: "Turn the impious and they shall not be (Prov. 12)." Mary, therefore, anointed the holy crown of God, being already beloved, already made familiar, and evolved far from the contagions of that female sinner whom that unhappy sevenfold group confounded.

Furthermore, if the two aforementioned ointments are of such dignity that one pleases the feet, the other the head of the Ruler; where then shall we be able to find that third, which is best and superexcellent? But far be it that the spouse of Truth should dissent from the truth; and boast that she has something such which she cannot have. There is therefore a third ointment of piety, which is above all aromatics, healthful for all diseases and perils, and which is found to be ineffective for no plague ever. For of it we read thus: "Mary Magdalene, and Mary of James, and Salome bought aromatics, that coming they might anoint Jesus (Mark 16)." Seest thou proposed in the first front of the chapter, that not one, or two, but three are scarcely sufficient for buying an ointment of so great composition? Understandest thou that not the feet, or the head, but the whole body of the Crucified one this preparation claims for itself? A preparation without doubt precious, which may suffice for the whole body of the Creator? And attend, because the ointment poured upon the feet he received with such most worthy leniency, that he convicted the murmuring Pharisee with parabolical prolixity, and rebuked him with a retorted example (Luke 7). But also concerning the ointment poured over his head he rebuked the indignant disciples, protesting it to be a good work of the woman, and checked their swollen animosity with moderate words. This indeed so salubrious, and so wonderful he wished to be expended on his dead body, which he certainly reserved while living. For Christ has two bodies, one which he received in the Virgin; the other of the Church, which the benignity of the Redeemer holds more dear. Finally, he exposed that one to death for this one, and to torments, addicted to the cross, bound with the wicked, condemned by a most shameful death. Shall we be able to prepare so salubrious a preparation? All the miseries of the miserable, as much of souls as of bodies, inspected with the eye of piety, are its species. These therefore in the mortar of largess, broken with the pestle of sweetness, and smoothed with the oil of charity, with the fire of compassion kindled, and scummed in the cauldron of perseverance, make an ointment to be admired even by the angels themselves.

Sunt viri divitiarum in domo Domini virtutum; vestigemus, an apud eos hujusmodi habeantur unguenta. Primus occurrit mihi Paulus, sicut ubique solet, totus praesenti delibutus unguento. «Quis in firmatur, inquit, et ego non infirmor?» (II Cor. XI.) Felix anima, facta sibi tanquam vas perditum, ut omnium miserias in sua conscientia colligaret. Totum se toti corpori Christi donaverat, omnibus omnia factus, ut omnes lucrifaceret (II Cor. IX). Sed et ille vir simplex, et rectus, et timens Deum, vide quomodo non secundum hominem, imo vero secundum hominem; et quod verius est, supra hominem ambulabat: «Oculus, inquit, fui caeco, et pes claudo; pater eram pauperum (Job I, XXIX)» et caetera, quae sic eum hoc unguento perunxerant, ut de misericordiae thalamo largius irroratus exiret. Samuelem recolo, qui non semel, sed omnibus diebus vitae suae lugebat super Saul; et cum sciret illum ab oculis divinitatis longius elongatum, non cessabat tamen compassio, quae in condolentis animum irrepserat, fundens lacrymas, et si non profuturas, pias tamen (I Reg. XV). David parricidam filium continua deploratione plorabat (II Reg. XVIII), plorans in eo non carnis necessitudinem, sed fidei destructionem. Cerne quomodo Joseph totus hoc melle illitus erat (Gen. XLIII). Veniunt fratres, jam non ante fratrem, sed ante dominum assistentes, conscii proditionis, homicidii rei, fratricidii succensores. Videns eos Joseph, et omnium injuriarum immemor, dulcissimis fletibus inundatur, et pietatis adeps, qui intus latitat, foras per oculos emanat. Fugit odium, nescit iram, tempus iracundiae non reservat, reddens bonum pro malo, pro credulitate dulcedinem. Pene oblitus sum Moysen adeo sacri hujus liquoris rore perfusum, ut totus ex eo superfundatur et profluat. Peccat Israel, et Moyses peccantem reconciliare nititur Creatori; sed dissimulat Dominus exaudire rogantem. Promittit plurima Moysi Creator omnium, et feriendi licentiam quaerit a Moyse, qui Moysen fecit. «Dimitte me, inquit, ut irascatur furor meus contra eos, et faciam te in gentem magnam.» Respondit Moyses: «Si dimittis, Domine, dimitte; alioquin dele me de libro, quem scripsisti (Exod. XXXII).» Obstupenda profecto dulcedo; et principatum gentis respuit alienae, et de libro viventium deleri desiderat, nisi peccantibus dimittatur offensa. Haec sunt unguenta propinationis et misericordiae, quae a sponsae uberibus eliciuntur, infirmitates omnes fugantia, profugantia [f. profligantia] passiones.

There are men of riches in the house of the Lord of virtues; let us track down whether such ointments are held among them. Paul occurs to me first, as he is accustomed everywhere, all anointed with the present ointment. "Who is weakened," he says, "and I am not weakened?" (2 Cor. 11.) Happy soul, made to itself as a lost vessel, that it might bind together the miseries of all in its own conscience. He had given himself whole to the whole body of Christ, made all things to all, that he might gain all (1 Cor. 9). But also that man simple, and upright, and fearing God, see how he walked not according to man, nay rather according to man; and what is truer, above man: "I was an eye," he says, "to the blind, and a foot to the lame; I was a father of the poor" (Job 29) and the rest, which had so anointed him with this ointment, that he went out more largely bedewed from the bridal chamber of mercy. I recollect Samuel, who not once, but all the days of his life was mourning over Saul; and although he knew him to be removed farther from the eyes of divinity, yet compassion did not cease, which had crept into the mind of the one condoling, pouring out tears, and if not to be profitable, yet pious (1 Sam. 15). David bewailed his parricidal son with continual lamentation (2 Sam. 18), bewailing in him not the necessity of the flesh, but the destruction of faith. See how Joseph was all anointed with this honey (Gen. 43). The brothers come, now standing not before a brother, but before a lord, conscious of betrayal, guilty of homicide, successors of fratricide. Joseph seeing them, and unmindful of all injuries, is inundated with the sweetest weepings, and the fat of piety, which lies hidden within, emanates without through the eyes. Hatred flees, he knows not anger, he reserves no time of wrath, rendering good for evil, sweetness for trust. I almost forgot Moses so bedewed with the moisture of this sacred liquor, that he is all overspread from it and flows out. Israel sins, and Moses strives to reconcile the sinner to the Creator; but the Lord dissembles to hear the one asking. The Creator of all promises very many things to Moses, and seeks license of striking from Moses, who made Moses. "Let me alone," he says, "that my fury may be angry against them, and I will make thee into a great nation." Moses answered: "If thou dismissest, Lord, dismiss; otherwise blot me out of the book which thou hast written" (Exod. 32). O stupendous sweetness indeed; he both rejects the principality of a strange nation, and desires to be blotted out from the book of the living, unless the offense be forgiven to the sinners. These are the ointments of propitiation and mercy, which are drawn out from the breasts of the spouse, putting to flight all infirmities, putting to flight passions.

Felix Maria unxit pedes Jesu, felicior eadem caput unxit auctoris, felicissima, quae rorem unguentarium toti Christi corpori praeparavit. Considera, quam vehementissimo dilectionis affectu beata haec mulier diligebat Christum regem. «Domine, inquit, si tu sustulisti eum, dicito mihi, et ego eum tollam (Joan. XX).» Quem eum dicis Maria, cum de nullo feceris mentionem ad quem relationem facias? Putasne, quod in omnium cordibus ita versetur memoria dilecti tui, sicut et in consistorio cordis tui? «Et ego, inquit, tollam eum.» Mira res. Hominem perfectae aetatis virum, cujus corpori vix centum librae sufficiunt unguentorum, tenerrima mulier portabis, et tolles? Ardens et affecta locutio, quae de puritatis amore refusa, promittit quod implere non potest. Nihil enim amanti difficile esse videtur. Quis desperare debeat, tanta peccatrice non solum veniam, sed gloriam consequente? Ipsa hodie intercedat pro peccatis nostris, et placatum nobis reddat judicem nostrum, sponsum suum, qui est Deus benedictus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XXX.

I. DE SANCTO APOLLINARE EPISCOPO RAVENNATE ET MARTYRE. (XXIII JUL.)

Hodierna die, fratres charissimi, ad jucundum nimis, satisque delectabile spectaculum venimus, et gloriosae palaestrae certamen oculis fidei contemplati sumus. Vidimus enim unum civem supernae Jerusalem pro rege suo strenue ad bella procedere, et innumerum Babyloniae vulgus unanimi conspiratione contra unum caput ferociter dimicare. Vidimus hunc militem Christi contra mundum triumphale vexillum crucis inferre, vidimus econtra amatores mundi pro dilecto suo constipatis cuneis obviare. Illi denique undique circumfusi diversa tela conjiciunt, sagittas emittunt, machinas erigunt; et ut vallum Christi irrumpere valeant, omnia praeliandi argumenta componunt; hic autem ense verbi spiritualis accinctus, lorica fidei indutus, spei galea praemunitus (Ephes. VI), sub patientiae suae se clypeo colligit, et hoc contra omnes bellicae tempestatis ictus vigilanti oculo circumducit. Illi ignem adhibent; sed iste immensae charitatis ardore succensus, incendia exterioris flammae non sentit. Illi bullientibus aquis dilacerata membra perfundunt; iste largo sancti Spiritus imbre divinitus refrigeratur, cantans cum Propheta: «Transivimus per ignem, et aquam, et eduxisti nos in refrigerium (Psal. LXV).» Illi virgis caedunt, sudibus frangunt, equuleo suspendunt, in carcerem mittunt, postremo catenatum in exsilium dirigunt; iste vero in arce mentis constitutus, quidquid erga se agitur, sub se fieri quasi alius quidam eminus intuetur, dicens cum Paulo: «Habemus thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus (II Cor. IV).»

Happy Mary anointed the feet of Jesus, happier the same anointed the head of the author, happiest she who prepared the ointment-dew for the whole body of Christ. Consider with what most vehement affection of love this blessed woman loved Christ the king. "Lord," she said, "if thou hast taken him away, tell me, and I will take him away" (John 20). Whom dost thou call "him", Mary, when thou hast made mention of no one to whom thou mayest make relation? Dost thou think that in the hearts of all the memory of thy beloved is so turned, just as in the consistory of thy heart? "And I," she said, "will take him away." A wonderful thing. A man of perfect age, for whose body scarcely a hundred pounds of ointments suffice, thou a most tender woman wilt carry and take away? A burning and affected speech, which poured back from the love of purity, promises what it cannot fulfill. For nothing seems difficult to a lover. Who ought to despair, so great a sinner following not only pardon, but glory? May she herself today intercede for our sins, and render to us placated our judge, her spouse, who is God blessed forever and ever. Amen.

Sermon XXX.

I. ON SAINT APOLLINARIS BISHOP OF RAVENNA AND MARTYR. (JULY 23rd)

Today, dearest brothers, we have come to a most pleasant and sufficiently delectable spectacle, and we have contemplated the contest of a glorious arena with the eyes of faith. For we have seen one citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem proceed strenuously to wars for his king, and the innumerable crowd of Babylon fight ferociously against one head with a unanimous conspiracy. We have seen this soldier of Christ bring in the triumphal banner of the cross against the world; we have seen on the contrary the lovers of the world meet him with thick wedges for their beloved. Finally, those surrounded on all sides cast diverse weapons, emit arrows, erect machines; and that they may be able to break through the rampart of Christ, they compose all arguments of battle; but this one, girded with the sword of the spiritual word, clothed with the breastplate of faith, forearmed with the helmet of hope (Eph. 6), collects himself under the shield of his patience, and leads this around with a vigilant eye against all blows of the warlike tempest. Those apply fire; but he, kindled by the heat of immense charity, does not feel the burnings of the exterior flame. Those pour over his mangled members with boiling waters; he is divinely refreshed by a large shower of the Holy Spirit, singing with the Prophet: "We have passed through fire and water, and thou hast led us out into refreshment" (Ps. 65). Those beat him with rods, break him with stakes, hang him on the rack, send him into prison, finally they direct him bound in chains into exile; but he, established in the citadel of his mind, beholds what is done toward him as if someone else were looking from afar, saying with Paul: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4).

Et iterum: «Licet exterior homo noster corrumpatur, is tamen, qui intus est, renovatur de die in diem. Id enim, quod in praesenti est momentaneum, et leve tribulationis nostrae, supra modum in sublimitate aeternae gloriae pondus operatur in nobis (Ibid.).»

Cuncta ergo hostium jacula facta sunt B. Apollinari gloriose vincendi materia. Et unde illorum crudelitas dejicere nititur, inde istius patientia ad standum firmius roboratur. Sanctus enim vir inter persecutionum bella deprehensus, quo durius telorum grandinem inhorrescere conspicit, eo cautius undique scutum suae gravitatis opponit. Et quo violentius pugnae impetus videt ingruere, eo magis se studet et in vires colligere, et ad agendum fortiter excitare. Ubique paratus assistit, ubique vigilanter intendit, et venientibus undique gladiis imperturba tus occurrit.

Quia vero, fratres mei, B. Apollinaris agonem palaestram superius nominavimus, utrumnam congrue positum sit, si placet, paulo subtilius inquiramus. Palaestrita quippe nudus luctatur, et B. Apollinaris mundanae possessionis indumento nudus fuisse cognoscitur. In spectaculo autem civium hujusmodi lucta proponitur, ut B. Paulus de se aliisque Christi bellatoribus congrue testatur, dicens: «Spectaculum facti sumus angelis et hominibus (II Cor. IV).» Solet autem pueris oleum, quod videlicet ceroma ab eis dicitur, a campiductoribus tribui, unde eorum debeant omnia corporis membra perungi. Sanctus vero Petrus apostolus B. Apollinaris, non dicam campiductor, sed ductor, sancti Spiritus eum unctione perfudit, cum ad certamina persecutionum misit. Ut enim in sancta gestorum illius narratur historia, ait B. Petrus apostolus Apollinari discipulo suo: «Quid sedes nobiscum; ecce eruditus es de omnibus quae fecit Jesus. Surge, accipe Spiritum sanctum, simulque pontificatum, et perge ad urbem, quae vocatur Ravenna.» Quod enim dicit, accipe Spiritum sanctum, et perge, tale est, ac si diceret: Oleo membra perfunde, et bellum viriliter consere. De hoc enim sancti Spiritus oleo per prophetam dicitur: «Computrescet jugum a facie olei (Isa. X).» De hoc et per Psalmistam canitur: «Inveni David servum meum, oleo sancto meo unxi eum (Psal. LXXXVIII).»

Mos vero esse campiductorum solet, ut prius certaturi discipuli membra provideant, videlicet quam latum validumque sit pectus, quam sani plenique tumeant lacerti, quam subterpositus venter, nec mole gravet, nec extenuatione debilitet; et si cuncta bellico usui apta esse perspexerint, mox ejus segnitiem dura severitate corripiunt, et desides adhuc animos in amorem laudis accendunt, hortantur et instigant; et ne formidare debeant, suam ipsius coram eo fortitudinem laudant.

And again: "Though our outward man be corrupted, yet he who is within is renewed from day to day. For that which in the present is momentary, and the light of our tribulation, works in us a weight of eternal glory beyond measure in sublimity" (ibid.).

All the darts of the enemies, therefore, were made the material for blessed Apollinaris to conquer gloriously. And from where their cruelty strives to cast him down, from there his patience is strengthened to stand more firmly. For the holy man caught in the wars of persecutions, the more harshly he beholds the hail of weapons to shudder, the more cautiously he opposes on all sides the shield of his gravity. And the more violently he sees the impulses of the fight to rush in, the more he strives both to collect himself into strength, and to excite himself to act strongly. Everywhere he stands ready, everywhere he intends vigilantly, and he meets the swords coming from all sides undisturbed.

Because indeed, my brothers, we have named the contest of blessed Apollinaris an arena above, if it pleases, let us inquire a little more subtly whether it be congruously placed. For the wrestler wrestles naked, and blessed Apollinaris is known to have been naked of the garment of mundane possession. In the spectacle of the citizens, however, a wrestling of this kind is proposed, as blessed Paul congruously testifies concerning himself and other warriors of Christ, saying: "We have been made a spectacle to angels and men" (2 Cor. 4). But it is customary for boys that oil, which namely is called "ceroma" by them, be given by the camp-masters, from which all the members of their body ought to be anointed. Saint Peter the apostle was of blessed Apollinaris—I will not say camp-master, but master—who bedewed him with the unction of the Holy Spirit when he sent him to the contests of persecutions. For as is related in the holy history of his deeds, blessed Peter the apostle says to Apollinaris his disciple: "Why sittest thou with us? Behold, thou art learned concerning all things which Jesus did. Rise, receive the Holy Spirit, and at the same time the pontificate, and proceed to the city which is called Ravenna." For what he says, "Receive the Holy Spirit, and proceed," is such as if he said: Bedew the members with oil, and join the battle manfully. For of this oil of the Holy Spirit it is said through the prophet: "The yoke shall rot from the face of the oil" (Isa. 10). Of this also it is sung through the Psalmist: "I have found David my servant, with my holy oil I have anointed him" (Ps. 88).

For it is accustomed to be the custom of camp-masters, that they first provide for the members of the disciples about to contest, namely how broad and strong the chest is, how healthy and full the arms swell, how the belly placed beneath neither burdens with mass, nor weakens with attenuation; and if they shall have seen all things fit for warlike use, soon they correct his sluggishness with harsh severity, and kindle the minds yet idle into the love of praise, they exhort and instigate; and lest they ought to fear, they praise their own strength before him.

Sic nimirum, sic B. apostolus quasi ante ipsum arenae vestibulum alumni sui membra considerat; et ut se ad congrediendum praeparet, verbis suasoriae adhortationis inflammat. Quid est enim dicere, «quid sedes nobiscum,» nisi jam depone desidiam, ut post peractam victoriam pervenias ad coronam? Et quid est dicere, «ecce eruditus es de omnibus quae fecit Jesus,» nisi omnes tui corporis artus jam perfecto vigent robore, nihilque tibi jam superest nisi ut timore postposito, incipias dimicare? Unde apte subjungitur: «Praedica eis de nomine Jesu, et ne formidaveris;» tanquam diceret: Ex jussionis meae auctoritate congredere, brachia consere, ut communem utriusque regis possis victoriam de triumphatis hostibus reportare. Percurre impiger stadium, ut ad propositum victoribus merearis pertingere bravium. Non dubites arripere pugnam, de qua nobilem referes, auctore Deo, victoriae palmam. Ego, ego tibi praecipio, quia potestatem ligandi non solum in terra, sed et in coelestibus habeo; ego te ad pascendas oves Dominicas mitto, qui ovile totius sanctae Ecclesiae injuncta mihi cura custodio. Praerogativa ergo magistri sit discipulo audacia praesumendi, et mittentis auctoritas sit fiducia missi.

O beate apostole, quam libenter, quam alacriter motum tuae diversitatis intueor: et nunc te debilem, nunc fortissimum pulchra varietate contemplor! Debilem, inquam, negando magistrum, fortissimum vero pro ejusdem magistri confessione mittendo discipulum. Non times discipulo Ravennam multarum urbium dominam assignare, qui tibimetipsi expaveras unius sacerdotis ancillam. Non metuis illum in procellosos fluctus turbulentissimae civitatis solum mittere, qui cum ipso Creatore marium super marinas undas expaveras ambulare. Illi namque dictum est: «Aquilonem et mare tu creasti (Psal. LXXXVIII).» Licet enim dixeris: «Domine, jube me venire ad te (Matth. XIV):» nisi tamen expavisses, mergi utique non coepisses, nisi in navi fidei aliquam naufragii undam pertulisses, nullatenus ex ore Veritatis audisses: «Modicae fidei quare dubitasti?» (Ibid.) Nec mirum tibimetipsi maris tunc formidasse periculum, qui pro eadem mentis infirmitate, magistrum et Dominum tuum nolebas crucis subire patibulum. Cum enim tibi diceret, quod pro redemptione humani generis crucifigendus esset, protinus respondisti: «Absit a te, Domine, propitius tibi esto, Domine, ne fiat hoc (Matth. XVI).»

So indeed, so the blessed apostle considers the members of his nursling as if before the very vestibule of the arena; and that he may prepare him for joining battle, he inflames him with words of persuasive exhortation. For what is it to say, "why sittest thou with us?" but now lay aside idleness, that after the victory has been achieved thou mayest arrive at the crown? And what is it to say, "Behold, thou art learned concerning all things which Jesus did," but that all the joints of thy body already flourish with perfect strength, and nothing now remains for thee but that, with fear put aside, thou mayest begin to fight? Whence it is aptly subjoined: "Preach to them concerning the name of Jesus, and do not fear;" as if he said: Proceed by the authority of my command, join arms, that thou mayest be able to report the common victory of both kings from the triumphed enemies. Run through the stadium unslothful, that thou mayest merit to reach the prize proposed to the victors. Do not hesitate to seize the fight, concerning which thou wilt report the noble palm of victory, God being the author. I, I command thee, because I have the power of binding not only on earth, but also in the heavens; I send thee to feed the Lord's sheep, I who guard the fold of the whole holy Church with the care enjoined to me. Therefore let the prerogative of the master be the audacity of presuming for the disciple, and let the authority of the one sending be the confidence of the one sent.

O blessed apostle, how gladly, how alacritously I behold the movement of thy diversity: and now I contemplate thee weak, now strongest with a beautiful variety! Weak, I say, by denying the master, but strongest by sending the disciple for the confession of the same master. Thou fearest not to assign to the disciple Ravenna, the mistress of many cities, who hadst thyself trembled at the handmaid of one priest. Thou fearest not to send him alone into the stormy waves of a most turbulent city, who with the Creator of the seas himself hadst trembled to walk upon the marine waves. For to him it was said: "The North and the sea thou hast created" (Ps. 88). For although thou saidst: "Lord, bid me come to thee" (Matt. 14): yet unless thou hadst feared, thou wouldst certainly not have begun to be submerged; unless thou hadst borne some wave of shipwreck in the ship of faith, thou wouldst by no means have heard from the mouth of Truth: "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" (ibid.) Nor is it a wonder that thou then fearedst the danger of the sea, who for the same infirmity of mind didst not wish thy master and Lord to undergo the gibbet of the cross. For when he said to thee, that he was to be crucified for the redemption of the human race, immediately thou answeredst: "Be it far from thee, Lord, be propitious to thyself, Lord, let this not be" (Matt. 16).

Quid est hoc, B. apostole? Nunquid vis claudere locum, unde nostrae redemptionis est pretium exiturum? Nunquid vis fontem restringere, qui pravitatis nostrae descendit maculas emundare? Ecce jam nosti illum procul dubio Deum esse, tamen dissuades mortem subire. Nisi enim Deum crederes, propitius tibi esto, Domine, non dixisses.

Concordat denique fides discipuli cum assertione Magistri. «Potestatem, inquit, habeo ponendi animam meam, et potestatem habeo iterum sumendi illam (Joan. X).» Sed qui fide stas, infirmitate jaces, quem fides erigit, timor sternit. Qui ergo Magistro crucis timueras mortem, et tibimetipsi pelagi profunditatem, tunc dilectum discipulum non dubitas mittere inter persecutorum furentium rabiem. Cur hoc, nisi quia completum est in te, quod per coapostolum tuum dicitur, quia «timor non est in charitate, sed perfecta charitas foras mittit timorem?» (I Joan. IV.) Jam enim iterum audieras a Domino (Joan. XXI.): «Simon, amas me?» Et respondens: «Domine, tu scis quia amo te;» illico audisti: «Pasce oves meas.» Dixerat iterum Dominus: «Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego diligo vos (Joan. XV).» Sicut ergo te Dominus dilexit, cum pro pascendis ovibus suis inter scandala persecutorum misit; sic et tu discipulum diligis, cum pro eisdem ovibus ad martyrium dirigis.

Sed libet, fratres mei, haec apostolica verba subtili indagatione discutere, et quomodo canonica ecclesiasticae censurae auctoritas in eligendis praepositis unam ubique teneat regulam, praevidere. Dicitur enim B. Apollinari: «Quid sedes nobiscum? Ecce eruditus es de omnibus quae fecit Jesus.» Rursus idem apostolorum princeps cum in loco Judae alium subrogare voluisset apostolum, ut neophytorum reprimeret pravitatem, inquit: «Oportet ergo ex his viris, qui nobiscum congregati sunt in omni tempore, quo intravit, et exivit inter nos Dominus Jesus, testem resurrectionis ejus nobiscum fieri unum ex istis (Act. I).» Hinc idem ipse gentibus Christum evangelizans, aiebat: «Hunc Deus suscitavit tertia die, et dedit eum manifestum fieri non omni populo, sed testibus praeordinatis a Deo, nobis qui manducavimus et bibimus cum illo, postquam surrexit a mortuis (Act. X).» Hinc ipse Dominus in Evangelio cum de mittendo sancto Spiritu apostolis loqueretur. «Ille, inquit, testimonium perhibebit de me, et vos testimonium perhibebitis, quia ab initio mecum estis (Joan. XVI);» tanquam diceret: Idcirco idoneum de me testimonium perhibebitis, quia quidquid alios docueritis, longae conversationis assiduitate ipsi antea didicistis.

What is this, blessed apostle? Dost thou wish to shut the place from where the price of our redemption is about to go out? Dost thou wish to restrain the fount, which descends to cleanse the stains of our depravity? Behold now thou knowest him without any doubt to be God, yet thou persuadest him not to undergo death. For unless thou believedst him to be God, "Be propitious to thyself, Lord," thou wouldst not have said.

Finally, the faith of the disciple agrees with the assertion of the Master. "I have power," he said, "to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again (John X)." But thou who standest by faith, liest down by weakness; him whom faith raises up, fear prostrates. Thou, therefore, who hadst feared the death of the cross for the Master, and for thyself the depth of the sea, dost not then hesitate to send the beloved disciple into the midst of the madness of raging persecutors. Why is this, unless because that is fulfilled in thee which is said by thy fellow apostle, that "fear is not in charity, but perfect charity casteth out fear?" (I John IV.) For now thou hadst heard again from the Lord (John XXI): "Simon, lovest thou me?" And answering: "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," thou heardest immediately: "Feed my sheep." The Lord had said again: "As the Father hath loved me, I also love you (John XV)." Therefore, as the Lord loved thee when he sent thee among the scandals of persecutors to feed his sheep; so also thou lovest the disciple when thou directest him to martyrdom for the sake of the same sheep.

But it is pleasing, my brothers, to discuss these apostolic words with subtle investigation, and to foresee how the canonical authority of ecclesiastical censure holds one rule everywhere in choosing leaders. For it is said to blessed Apollinaris: "Why sittest thou with us? Behold, thou art instructed concerning all things which Jesus did." Again, when the same prince of the apostles wished to substitute another apostle in the place of Judas, so that he might repress the depravity of the neophytes, he said: "It behooveth, therefore, of these men who have been assembled with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, that one of these should become a witness with us of his resurrection (Acts I)." Hence the same man, evangelizing Christ to the Gentiles, said: "Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses preordained by God, to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose again from the dead (Acts X)." Hence the Lord himself says in the Gospel, when speaking to the apostles about sending the Holy Spirit. "He," he said, "shall give testimony of me, and you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning (John XVI);" as if he were saying: For this reason you shall give fitting testimony of me, because whatever you shall teach others, you yourselves first learned by the assiduity of long conversation.

Audiant neophyti, audiant elati, et quasi folles vento arrogantiae, et igne cupiditatis inflati, qui ante volunt docere, quam sciant; et in schola Christi ante inhiant in cathedra praesidere, quam ferulam sentiant. Dumque inordinato ordine non per ostium, sed aliunde ad regiminis jura prorumpunt, non se pastores esse, sed fures, et mercenarios patenter ostendunt, qui prodesse nil curant, sed praeesse flamma perniciosissimae cupiditatis anhelant. Hi profecto non praeferuntur, ut Christi ovile custodiant, non ut gregem Dominicum pascant, sed ut miseram carnem suam in lasciviis et voluptatibus molliter nutriant; dumque se proximis praelatos esse considerant, caecam mentem in superbiae cornibus exaltant. Audiant ergo, qui ejusmodi sunt, et vel curent se ab hac praesumptione compescere, vel noverint se a corpore sanctae Ecclesiae jam, etsi non aperte, vere tamen radicitus praecisos jacere. Ecce beati apostoli, super quos quasi solidissimas bases sancta fundatur Ecclesia, non novitium, non indoctum, sed illum ordinant, quem in doctrina, et sanctae conversationis studio perspexerint esse maturum. Hoc quaerit Petrus in Mathia, cum elegit in apostolatum, hoc in Apollinare cum promovet in episcopatum. Quod ergo Dominus providerat in apostolis, hoc apostoli considerant in apostolicis viris.

Illud etiam praetereundum non est, quod beatus apostolus osculans discipulum, emisit eum a se. Hic antiquorum Patrum consuetudo recolitur, et in novo jam saeculo veterum patriarcharum antiquitas reparatur. Ecce Isaac iterum filium osculatur. Ecce Jacob iterum benedicitur, et patriarcha a patriarcha ex authenticae traditionis ordine consecratur. Illi dictum est: «Accede ad me, fili, ut benedicat tibi anima mea (Gen. XXVII).» Ipsi dictum est: «Surge, accipe Spiritum sanctum.» Illi dictum est: «Det tibi Deus de rore coeli, et de pinguedine terrae abundantia frumenti, vini et olei (Ibid.);» isti vero dicitur: «Mittat Dominus noster Jesus Christus angelum suum, qui praeparet iter tuum, et quae postulaveris, annuat tibi.» Sic et ipse Jacob Ephraim et Manasse filiis Joseph osculum praebuit, cum eos inter reliquos patriarchas constituens, benedixit (Gen. XLVIII). Hinc etiam ecclesiasticus mos inolevit, ut pontifices his, quos consecrant, osculum tribuant. Hinc, fratres, hinc rogo, colligite, B. Apollinaris quanta sit celsitudo, qui ut apostolus ad arcem pontificatus eligitur, et ut patriarcha solemniter ordinatur. Qui et ab illo, et non diverso modo provehitur, a quo et apostoli promoventur.

Let the neophytes hear, let the proud hear, and those inflated as if by bellows with the wind of arrogance and the fire of greed, who wish to teach before they know; and in the school of Christ they pant to preside in the chair before they feel the rod. And while they burst forth into the rights of government by a disordered order, not through the door but from elsewhere, they openly show that they are not pastors, but thieves and mercenaries, who care nothing to be of service, but pant to be in command with the most pernicious flame of greed. These surely are not preferred so that they may guard the sheepfold of Christ, nor that they may feed the Lord's flock, but that they may softly nourish their wretched flesh in lasciviousness and pleasures; and while they consider themselves set over their neighbors, they exalt their blind mind on the horns of pride. Let those, therefore, who are of this sort hear, and either let them take care to restrain themselves from this presumption, or let them know that they already lie cut off from the body of the holy Church, if not openly, yet truly from the roots. Behold, the blessed apostles, upon whom the holy Church is founded as upon most solid bases, do not ordain a novice, nor an unlearned man, but him whom they have seen to be mature in doctrine and in the study of holy conduct. This Peter seeks in Matthias when he chooses him for the apostolate; this in Apollinaris when he promotes him to the episcopate. What, therefore, the Lord had provided in the apostles, this the apostles consider in apostolic men.

That also must not be passed over, that the blessed apostle, kissing the disciple, sent him out from him. Here the custom of the ancient Fathers is recalled, and in a new age the antiquity of the ancient patriarchs is repaired. Behold, Isaac again kisses his son. Behold, Jacob again is blessed, and a patriarch is consecrated by a patriarch according to the order of authentic tradition. To the one it was said: "Come near to me, my son, that my soul may bless thee (Gen. XXVII)." To the other it was said: "Rise, receive the Holy Spirit." To the one it was said: "May God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, abundance of corn, wine and oil (Ibid.);" but to this one it is said: "May our Lord Jesus Christ send his angel, who may prepare thy way, and grant thee what thou hast asked." So also Jacob himself gave a kiss to Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, when, establishing them among the other patriarchs, he blessed them (Gen. XLVIII). Hence also the ecclesiastical custom has grown, that pontiffs give a kiss to those whom they consecrate. From here, brothers, from here I ask you to gather, how great is the loftiness of blessed Apollinaris, who as an apostle is chosen for the height of the pontificate, and as a patriarch is solemnly ordained. Who is promoted both by that one, and in no different manner, as that by which the apostles are promoted.

Videtur ergo in illo et apostolica dignitas, et patriarchalis sublimitas; quia et apostolico ore provehitur, et patriarchali solemnitate consecratur. Unde fit, ut cum caeteri, qui pro testimonio veritatis supplicia passi sunt, martyres nuncupentur; hic, qui non solum passus, sed etiam ad martyrium ab apostolo tam nobiliter est electus, apostolicus martyr jure dicatur.

Inter haec vos, fratres charissimi, ad vosmetipsos redite, actus vestros sollicita examinatione discutite; et qui laudes martyris libenter auditis, laudabilem vitam habere curate. Non est enim speciosa laus in ore peccatoris (Eccli. XV). Illi enim digne sanctis laudibus efferunt, qui laudabiliter vivunt. Et hi fortium virtutes utiliter audiunt, quos audita praeconia ad amorem imitationis accendunt. Caeterum quid prodest si alios constitutos in sublimibus videas, ipse vero in praeceps ad ima descendas? Quid prodest fortium bellatorum triumphos extollere, si ipse non erubescas quotidie terga hostibus dare? Quisquis ergo gaudes fortiter egisse martyres Christi, corripe et ipse arma inter milites Christi. Desunt exterius hostes? Verte manus in te, et multos seditiosos invenies cives. Doma superbiam, jugula iracundiam, exstingue libidinem, reprime avaritiam, occide invidiam; et, ut breviter cum Apostolo cuncta complectar: «Crucifige carnem tuam cum vitiis (Gal. V).» Hoc est fortiter agere, hoc est viriliter dimicare. Nam quid juvat, si circa vallum te non obsideant acies persequentium, et intra urbis moenia grassetur barbaries vitiorum? Vis autem adhuc apertius discere, qualiter in pace sanctae Ecclesiae valeas martyrium invenire? Audi attente, intellige diligenter. Cor vigilet, oculus non dormitet. Quod enim dico, brevissimum est. Ascende igitur tribunal mentis, et temetipsum pertrahe ad judicium quaestionis. Cogitatio accuset, animus judicet, poenitens conscientia velut carnifex feriat, lacrymarum rivus velut vulnus erumpat. Sic sic per martyrii similitudinem, ad veram pervenies martyrium dignitatem, auxiliante Domino nostro Jesu Christo, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et gloriatur per infinita saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XXXI.

II. DE SANCTO APOLLINARE EPISCOPO ET MARTYRE. (XXIII JUL.)

There is seen in him, therefore, both apostolic dignity and patriarchal sublimity; because he is promoted by an apostolic mouth and consecrated by patriarchal solemnity. Whence it happens that while others, who have suffered punishments for the testimony of the truth, are called martyrs; this one, who not only suffered, but was also so nobly chosen for martyrdom by the apostle, is rightly called an apostolic martyr.

Among these things, most dear brothers, return to yourselves, discuss your acts with a solicitous examination; and you who gladly hear the praises of the martyr, take care to have a laudable life. For praise is not beautiful in the mouth of a sinner (Ecclus. XV). For they worthily extol with holy praises, who live laudably. And these hear the virtues of the strong with profit, whom the heard praises kindle to the love of imitation. Otherwise, what does it profit if thou seest others placed in high places, while thou thyself descendest headlong to the depths? What does it profit to extol the triumphs of strong warriors, if thou thyself art not ashamed to turn thy back to the enemies every day? Whosoever, therefore, rejoicest that the martyrs of Christ have acted strongly, seize also thyself the arms among the soldiers of Christ. Are enemies lacking on the outside? Turn thy hands upon thyself, and thou wilt find many seditious citizens. Tame pride, slay wrath, extinguish lust, restrain greed, kill envy; and, to embrace all things briefly with the Apostle: "Crucify thy flesh with its vices (Gal. V)." This is to act strongly, this is to fight manfully. For what does it help if the ranks of persecutors do not besiege thee around the rampart, and the barbarity of vices rages within the walls of the city? But dost thou wish to learn yet more clearly how thou mayest find martyrdom in the peace of the holy Church? Listen attentively, understand diligently. Let the heart keep watch, let the eye not slumber. For what I say is very brief. Ascend therefore the tribunal of the mind, and drag thyself to the judgment of the question. Let thought accuse, let the soul judge, let the penitent conscience strike like an executioner, let the stream of tears break out like a wound. So, so through the likeness of martyrdom, thou shalt arrive at the true dignity of martyrs, by the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and is glorified for infinite ages of ages. Amen.

Sermon XXXI.

II. ON SAINT APOLLINARIS, BISHOP AND MARTYR. (JULY 23)

Apostolici martyris gloriosa solemnitas, fratres charissimi, alacrem fecit vestrae devotionis adesse conventum. Unde dignum est, ut communi vobiscum laetitia pariter exsultemus, et totam hanc diem in psalmis, hymnis et canticis spiritualibus expendamus. Merito hodie profusis gaudiis totus ubique terrarum orbis exsultat. Merito sancta Ecclesia, dispositis fidelium choris, dulcisonas melodiarum voces alternat. Gaudeat Antiochia, quae talem meruit gignere filium; exsultet Roma, quae talem potuit habere discipulum; praecipue vero jubilet urbs Ravenna, quae tantum meruit referre patronum. Quae enim erat daemonum antea delubrum, per hunc coelestium senatorum facta est capitolium. Ibi enim jam martyrum corpora requiescunt, ibi multorum sanctorum patrocinia reconduntur. Quae ergo prius male fecunda in filiis suis multas stipulas germinabat inferno, jam per Dei gratiam multos cives parturit coelo; ut jam populo illius non immerito dicatur: «Jam non estis hospites et advenae; sed estis cives sanctorum, et domestici Dei!» (Ephes. II.) Et per Petrum: «Vos estis genus electum, regale sacerdotium, gens sancta, populus acquisitionis (I Petr. II).» Reges enim sumus, quia crucis vexillum in fronte portamus. Sacerdotes autem jure dicimur, quia chrismatis unctione linimur.

Juste ergo egregia illa metropolis de B. Apollinaris festivitate specialiter gaudet, per quem, olim profana et rustica, facta est nunc sacerdotalis et regia. Cui cum Romanis arcibus adeo communis est dignitas, ut illa mater, ista dicatur congrue filia. Quod enim illa in coelesti clavigero, hoc totum ista possidet in discipulo; et quod illi praerogat apostolus, hoc addit isti martyr apostolicus. Si enim Constantinopolitana civitas, quia Romanos in se transtulit cives, secunda Roma est nuncupata; quanto magis haec, quae tantum principem de Roma suscepit, secunda Roma est appellanda! Nunquidnam gloriosius est suscipere Quirites de Romana curia, quam habere martyrem de Romana Ecclesia? Ex ea igitur parte, qua Roma carnalis est, carnales genuit; ex ea vero, qua spiritualis est, spiritualem ex se filium procreavit. «Quod enim natum est de carne caro est, et quod natum est ex spiritu, spiritus est (Joan. III).» Quod autem tantum civitati illi tribuimus, ut Romae similem esse dicamus, ad laudem Dei referimus, non favores hominum affectamus. Nam ornatus habitationis, decus est habitantis; et honor militis, gloria est imperatoris.

The glorious solemnity of the apostolic martyr, most dear brothers, has made the assembly of your devotion be present with alacrity. Whence it is worthy that we should likewise exult with a common joy with you, and spend this whole day in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Meritedly today the whole world everywhere exults with profuse joys. Meritedly the holy Church, with the choirs of the faithful arranged, alternates the sweet-sounding voices of melodies. Let Antioch rejoice, which merited to beget such a son; let Rome exult, which was able to have such a disciple; but especially let the city of Ravenna jubilate, which merited to bring back such a patron. For that which was before a shrine of demons, has been made through him a capitol of the heavenly senators. For there now the bodies of the martyrs rest, there the patronages of many saints are hidden. She, therefore, who before was evilly fruitful in her children and germinated much straw for hell, now through the grace of God brings forth many citizens for heaven; so that it is not undeservedly said to her people: "Now you are not strangers and foreigners; but you are citizens of the saints, and the domestics of God!" (Ephes. II.) And through Peter: "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people (I Pet. II)." For we are kings because we bear the banner of the cross on our forehead. But we are rightly called priests because we are anointed with the unction of the chrism.

Justly, therefore, that distinguished metropolis specially rejoices in the feast of blessed Apollinaris, through whom, once profane and rustic, she has now been made sacerdotal and royal. Whose dignity is so common with the Roman heights that the one may be called the mother and the other fittingly the daughter. For all that the former possesses in the heavenly key-bearer, the latter possesses in the disciple; and what the apostle grants to the former, the apostolic martyr adds to the latter. For if the city of Constantinople, because she transferred Roman citizens into herself, has been called a second Rome; how much more should this city, which received such a prince from Rome, be called a second Rome! Is it indeed more glorious to receive Quirites from the Roman curia than to have a martyr from the Roman Church? From that part, therefore, by which Rome is carnal, she begot carnal ones; but from that by which she is spiritual, she procreated a spiritual son from herself. "For that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John III)." But that we attribute so much to that city, as to say it is like Rome, we refer to the praise of God, not seeking the favors of men. For the ornament of a dwelling is the honor of the inhabitant; and the honor of a soldier is the glory of the commander.

Libet autem, dilectissimi, pulchrum divinae dispensationis ordinem studiose perpendere; et quam mirabiliter omnipotens Deus regionis illius tenebras illustrare decreverit, indagare. Sicut enim matutinus Lucifer ab ortu surgens solem praecedit, ita beatissimus martyr ab orientali plaga progrediens, nomen Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui vere est sol Justitiae, primus Ravennae finibus introduxit. Et quam bene sibi Luciferi nomen congruit, qui primum adventus sui miraculum de lumine fecit! Nam mox ut in suburbano est receptus hospitio, caeco Irenaei militis filio lumen reddidit, et sic de parentum cordibus infidelitatis tenebras effugavit; et dum illi oculos reddidit frontis, istis multo felicius lumen aperuit cordis.

Recte ergo dicitur, quia sicut Lucifer in orbem, ita beatissimus vir suam est delatus in urbem. Quot autem ibi supplicia sustinuerit, quot mortium tormenta percurrerit, ille quidem perferre mirabiliter potuit, nos referre quantalibet linguae nostrae facundia non valemus. Caeditur, uritur, vulneratur, equuleo tortus per membra cuncta discerpitur; sed quo magis caro per tormenta concutitur, eo mens in Deum fixa firmius roboratur; et quasi igne succensa materies, quo plus adversitatum ventis impellitur, eo in amorem Dei ardentius inflammatur. Sanctus quippe vir dum foris tolerat turbinem persecutionis, intus recurrit ad arcem mentis; et inde cuncta sub se ire despicit, inter quae transire corporaliter etiam semetipsum cernit. Minas non metuit, tormenta alacriter patiendo contemnit. Hinc enim per Salomonem dicitur: «Justus quasi leo confidens, absque terrore erit (Prov. XXVIII).» Hinc ab eo iterum scriptum est: «Non contristabit justum, quidquid ei acciderit (Prov. XII).» Jam quippe Spiritus ad alta suspensus in hoc ineffabiliter gaudet, dum sibi cumulari gaudia per tormenta videt, Poenis fovetur, incendio refrigeratur, fame reficitur, inopia dilatatur; et id maximum lucrum deputat, si gravem de passione Domini sarcinam portat, tantumque sibi minui timet de praemio, quantum sibimet subtrahi conspicit de tormento.

Quid plura? Iterum caeditur, iterum cruciatur, ad extremum quoque nudis plantis super ardentes prunas stare compellitur; sed dum uterque pes supposito igne comburitur, lingua in confessione Christi liberius relaxatur. Segnior quippe fuerat ignis, qui exterius incendebat, quam qui inferius inflammabat; tanquam alter coqueretur, et alter loqueretur; alius verba ederet, alius verbera sustineret. Et revera alter, Veritate attestante, quae ait: «Non vos estis, qui loquimini, sed Spiritus Patris vestri, qui loquitur in vobis (Matth. X).»

It is pleasing, most beloved, to consider studiously the beautiful order of the divine dispensation; and to investigate how wonderfully almighty God decreed to illustrate the darkness of that region. For just as the morning Lucifer rising from the east precedes the sun, so the most blessed martyr, proceeding from the eastern region, first introduced the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly the sun of Justice, into the borders of Ravenna. And how well the name of Lucifer fits him, who performed the first miracle of his arrival concerning light! For as soon as he was received into a suburban lodging, he restored light to the blind son of the soldier Irenaeus, and thus drove away the darkness of infidelity from the hearts of the parents; and while he restored the eyes of the forehead to the former, he much more happily opened the light of the heart to the latter.

Rightly, therefore, is it said, that as Lucifer is brought into the world, so the most blessed man was brought into his city. But how many punishments he sustained there, how many torments of deaths he ran through, he indeed was able to endure wonderfully, but we are not able to relate with whatever eloquence of our tongue. He is beaten, he is burned, he is wounded, tortured on the rack he is torn apart through all his members; but the more the flesh is shaken by torments, the more firmly is the mind fixed in God strengthened; and like material kindled by fire, the more it is driven by the winds of adversities, the more ardently is it inflamed in the love of God. The holy man, indeed, while he tolerates the whirlwind of persecution without, recurs within to the height of the mind; and from there he despises all things going under him, among which he perceives even himself to pass corporally. He does not fear threats, he despises torments by suffering them alacritely. For hence it is said through Solomon: "The just as a confident lion, shall be without terror (Prov. XXVIII)." Hence again it was written by him: "Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad (Prov. XII)." For now the Spirit suspended to high things rejoices ineffably in this, while it sees joys being accumulated for itself through torments. He is cherished by punishments, he is refreshed by fire, he is restored by hunger, he is dilated by want; and he accounts it the greatest gain if he bears a heavy burden from the passion of the Lord, and he fears that as much should be diminished from his reward as he perceives to be subtracted from his torment.

What more? Again he is beaten, again he is tortured, at the last also he is compelled to stand with bare soles upon burning coals; but while each foot is consumed by the fire placed beneath, the tongue is more freely relaxed in the confession of Christ. Surely the fire which was kindling from without was slower than that which was inflaming from within; as if the one were being cooked, and the other were speaking; one were giving out words, another were sustaining blows. And in truth it was another, Truth attesting, who says: "It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you (Matth. X)."

Et, ut triumpho beatissimi martyris ipsa contraria elementa concorditer serviant, dum ignis potentiori igne contemnitur, caro, quae usta fuerat, aquis bullientibus elixatur; sicque in odore suavitatis Domino duo sacrificia ex una fiunt victima.

Age, age, responde mihi, turba phrenetica, et ab ipsis furiosis merito deridenda. Quid furis? Quid saevis? Quid cruentis dentibus et lupina rabie debaccharis? Nunquid speras suppliciis Christi militem cedere, et a sancto proposito mentem posse mutare? Non est hujusmodi mens in Deum fixa, ignorat in bello perdere militiam Christianam. Nescit praeliator noster rigore mollescere, nescit gladios formidare; imo quo magis impetitur, eo robustior invenitur. Eia percute, incende, coque, gyra, regyra, divelle a visceribus viscera, imprime vulneribus vulnera. Apollinaris noster, si discutitur, idem ipse, qui fuerat, invenitur; non potest jam Christum in loquendo negare lingua, quem caetera patiendo confessa sunt membra. Nam si fictile sui corporis vasculum, dum adhuc sanum esset pro conservando fidei thesauro lacerari permisit, quanto magis tunc pro jam quassato et fracto tam pretiosum thesaurum perdere formidabit! Tu ergo, tu miserabilis turba agonothetam Christi dum dejicere moliris, extollis; dum superare niteris, insuperabilem reddis. Tu facis, ut corpus suum ille despiciat, et ex eo egredi tota animi alacritate contendat; et dum novis et exquisitis suppliciis eum mirabiliter crucias ut mirabilem facias martyrem, elaboras. Tua enim stulta sapientia fecit, quod hodie nomen B. Apollinaris tam clarum et celebre per ora fidelium currit. Servisti nempe, dum saevisti; et auxisti palmam, dum exaggeras poenam. Nam quid non ad victoris gloriam vecors ingenium tuum reperit, quando in honorem transierunt triumphi ipsa etiam instrumenta supplicii?

Sed adhuc diligentius laceratum corpus examina, adhuc ea ipsa, quae confossa sunt membra, retracta, coque, discerpe ictus, caede, verbera, percute; jam de toto corpore invictissimi martyris quid aliud, nisi plagas poteris vulnerare? Bulliat aurum, non minuitur; caedatur adamas, non secatur. Jam denique ille ad coeli culmen anhelat, jam mente in sublimibus habitat; nihil dolet, nihil timet, nisi, o persecutores, solam pietatem vestram, quae si ei tribuitur, ab ipso impietas crudelissima deputatur; et si tela vestra ad ejus vultis interiora pertingere, sola illum pietate ferite. Tunc enim graviter indignamini, si miseremini: tunc immaniter laceratis, si parcitis: et, ut ita dixerim, tunc punitis, si tunc non punitis.

And, so that the contrary elements themselves may concordantly serve the triumph of the most blessed martyr, while the fire is despised by a more powerful fire, the flesh, which had been scorched, is boiled in bubbling waters; and so two sacrifices are made from one victim in an odor of sweetness to the Lord.

Come, come, answer me, phrenetic crowd, and deservedly to be derided by those very furies. Why dost thou rage? Why dost thou rave? Why dost thou revel with bloody teeth and lupine madness? Dost thou expect the soldier of Christ to yield to punishments, and to be able to change his mind from his holy purpose? A mind fixed in God is not of this sort; the Christian warfare knows not how to lose in war. Our fighter knows not how to soften from rigor, he knows not how to dread swords; nay rather, the more he is attacked, the more robust is he found. Ho! strike, kindle, cook, turn, turn again, tear away viscera from viscera, print wounds upon wounds. Our Apollinaris, if he is discussed, is found the same as he had been; the tongue cannot now deny Christ in speaking, whom the other members have confessed by suffering. For if he permitted the clay vessel of his body to be lacerated for preserving the treasure of faith while it was yet sound, how much more will he then fear to lose so precious a treasure for one already shaken and broken! Thou therefore, thou miserable crowd, while thou strivest to cast down the prize-master of Christ, thou liftest him up; while thou attemptest to overcome him, thou renderest him insuperable. Thou makest him despise his own body, and strive to go out from it with all alacrity of soul; and while thou torturest him wonderfully with new and exquisite punishments so that thou mayest make a wonderful martyr, thou laborest. For thy foolish wisdom has made that today the name of blessed Apollinaris runs so clear and celebrated through the mouths of the faithful. Thou hast served indeed while thou hast raged; and thou hast increased the palm while thou exaggeratest the punishment. For what did thy foolish genius not find for the glory of the victor, when even the instruments of punishment themselves passed into the honor of the triumph?

But still examine more diligently the lacerated body, still retract those very members which have been pierced, cook them, tear them apart with blows, beat them, strike them; now from the whole body of the most invincible martyr, what else couldst thou wound but wounds? Let the gold boil, it is not diminished; let the adamant be beaten, it is not cut. Now finally he pants for the height of heaven, now in mind he dwells in high places; he feels no pain, he fears nothing, unless, O persecutors, your piety alone, which if it is granted to him, is by him accounted the most cruel impiety; and if you wish your weapons to reach to his interior parts, strike him with piety alone. For then you are heavily indignant, if you have mercy; then you lacerate him immensely, if you spare him; and, so to speak, then you punish him, if then you do not punish him.

O robustissimum pectus, quod nulla queunt tela perfodere, nulla possunt spicula penetrare! O munitissimum Christi vallum, quod non impacti arietes diruunt, nulla machinarum armenta convellunt! Quanta hunc retributionis gloria nunc extollit in summis, quem tanta tribulationis adversitas pressit in imis! Econtra, nunc cum ignitis beatorum spirituum coetibus emicat, cum trabeatis senatoribus curiae coelestis exsultat, cum patriarchis in aureo sublimiter solio inthronizatus, cum purpuratis martyribus mirabiliter coronatus. Cum his omnibus stola indutus gloriae ineffabiliter emicat, et ante imperatorem suum melodum alleluia perenniter jubilat. Quo te precamur, martyr beatissime, ut nos manus tuae orationis erigat, quos reatus nostri pondus inferius gravat; quatenus qui hic tuae virtutis praeconia referre gaudemus, illic tuae beatitudinis partem aliquam sentiamus. Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XXXII.

III. DE SANCTO APOLLINARE EPISCOPO RAVENNATE ET MARTYRE. (XXIII JUL.)

Audivimus hodie, fratres charissimi, insuperabilem Christi militis fortitudinem, audivimus triumphalem apostolici martyris passionem. Mirabilis in persequentibus pugna, mirabilis in persecuto victoria. Illi enim ad expugnandum Christianae militiae strenuum bellatorem, non solum ferrea arma corripiunt, sed ignes, aquas, ligna, lapides, et universa plane elementa armorum materiam faciunt, et in praeliandi argumenta convertunt. Iste vero quo acrius impugnatur, eo robustior invenitur; et quo magis corpus per tormenta distenditur, eo magis fides augetur. Insuperabilis denique miles est, cui virtus ex vulneribus crescit, ex minarum terroribus animositas surgit. Nova et inaudita pugna est, ubi peregrinus expugnat urbem, incola civitatem, unus populum, imbellis cuneum, inermis aciem, persona dejicit legionem. Mirabilis et stupenda victoria est, ubi vivit, qui occiditur; surgit, qui dejicitur; vincit, qui superatur; et postquam mortuus fuerit, omnem adversae partis aciem ad sui imperatoris signa convertit. Ubi mors evaditur, cum subitur; vita incipit, cum finitur. Novum litigium, ubi judicio praesidet populus, et unus deducitur judicandus; ubi unus innocens accusatur, multorum damnabilium censura depromitur; ubi justus vapulat, reus damnat.

O most robust breast, which no weapons can pierce through, no darts can penetrate! O most fortified rampart of Christ, which no driven rams demolish, no equipment of machines pulls down! How great a glory of retribution now exalts him in the highest, whom so great an adversity of tribulation pressed in the lowest! On the contrary, now he shines with the ignited companies of the blessed spirits, he exults with the robed senators of the heavenly court, inthroned loftily on a golden throne with the patriarchs, wonderfully crowned with the purple-robed martyrs. With all these, clothed in the stole of glory, he shines ineffably, and before his Emperor he perennially jubilates the melodious alleluia. Wherefore we pray thee, most blessed martyr, that the hand of thy prayer may lift us up, whom the weight of our guilt presses down below; so that we who here rejoice to relate the heraldry of thy virtue, may there perceive some part of thy blessedness. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns through all ages of ages. Amen.

Sermon XXXII.

III. ON SAINT APOLLINARIS, BISHOP OF RAVENNA AND MARTYR. (JULY 23)

We have heard today, most dear brothers, the insuperable fortitude of the soldier of Christ, we have heard the triumphal passion of the apostolic martyr. A wonderful fight in the persecutors, a wonderful victory in the persecuted. For those, to storm the strenuous warrior of the Christian warfare, not only seize iron weapons, but they make fires, waters, woods, stones, and plainly all the elements the material of arms, and convert them into the arguments of fighting. But this one, the more sharply he is attacked, the more robust is he found; and the more the body is distended by torments, the more is faith increased. He is finally an insuperable soldier, whose virtue grows from wounds, and whose animosity rises from the terrors of threats. It is a new and unheard-of fight, where a stranger storms the city, an inhabitant the state, one man a people, one weak man a battalion, one unarmed man a battle line, one person casts down a legion. It is a wonderful and stupendous victory, where he lives who is killed; he rises who is cast down; he conquers who is overcome; and after he shall have died, he converts the whole battle line of the adverse party to the banners of his Emperor. Where death is evaded when it is undergone; life begins when it is finished. A new litigation, where the people preside at the judgment, and one man is led out to be judged; where one innocent man is accused, and the censure of many damnable ones is brought forth; where the just man is beaten, and the guilty one condemns.

Sed inter omnes B. Apollinaris, non dicam Judices, sed carnifices, non praesides, sed tortores, tua, Messaline, crudelitas luporum excedit rabiem, leonum exsuperat feritatem. Nam post cruentorum verberum caedem, post patentium vulnerum multitudinem, post equulei appensionem, post aquarum fervescentium ustionem, os ejus saxo contundi praecipis et novo tormenti genere verba verberibus punis. Ecce artifex saevitia tua per effusam fellis amaritudinem novi te supplicii fecit auctorem. Et caecatus per iracundiam mentis oculus illud excogitando novo supplicio praevidet, quod sano consilio conspicere vix valeret. Et revera quid tibi reliqua membra fecerant, cum laniabas, cum cruciabas, cum torquebas, cum omnia immaniter lupinis morsibus depascebas? Ore te offenderat, ore te objurgaverat, ore frontis tuae inverecundiam confutabat. Muta membra nil fecerant.

Cur ergo, quod non admisit culpam, sustinet poenam? Quod non laesit, cur laeditur? Quod non deliquit, cur vindicatur? Si vis ergo in reum districtae sententiae tuum proferre vigorem, verbum examinetur, verbum judicetur, verbum verberibus torqueatur. Et quid plus dicam? Anima linguae, quae peccaverit, ipsa moriatur. Sed quid prodest, si in eum exerceas vindictam, in quo vindictae nequeas compescere causam? Si enim contunderis os carneum, est qui interius fabricet aliud, quod quidem possis audire, sed nulla valeas animadversione punire; ille videlicet, qui discipulis suis dicit: «Ego dabo vobis os et sapientiam, cui non poterunt resistere, et contradicere omnes adversarii vestri (Luc. XXI).» Ille, inquam, qui dicit: «Non vos estis, qui loquimini, sed Spiritus Patris vestri qui loquitur in vobis (Matth. X).»

Sed iterum in carcere horrifico clauditur, gravissimo catenarum pondere impeditur, in ligno extenditur, omni alimentorum sustentatione privatur. Ad constringendum quidem omnino carcer sufficeret, etiamsi catena deesset; ad puniendum autem sufficeret ignis poena, etiamsi famis cessaret inopia. Sed cui terrena esca subtrahitur, coelestibus epulis cautritur. Et victus quem judicis impietas negat, Dei largitas administrat. Et quod non tribuit carcerarius, minister hominis factus exhibet angelus. Angelus enim Domini nocte veniens ad eum, videntibus custodibus pavit et confortavit. Quam deliciosa fame affligitur, qui coelestis promptuarii dapibus satiatur, cui coelum fit cellarium, coelestis promus exhibet ministerium. Quam feliciter miser est, qui dum terrenis eget impendiis, angelicis fulcitur obsequiis; cui xenium divinitus mittitur, angelicus ministratur.

But among all the, I will not say judges, but executioners of blessed Apollinaris, not governors but torturers, thy cruelty, Messalinus, exceeds the madness of wolves, overcomes the ferocity of lions. For after the slaughter of bloody blows, after the multitude of open wounds, after the hanging on the rack, after the burning of boiling waters, thou commandest his mouth to be crushed with a stone and by a new kind of torment thou punishest words with blows. Behold, thy crafty cruelty through the poured-out bitterness of gall has made thee the author of a new punishment. And the eye of thy mind, blinded by the wrath of the soul, by excogitating that, foresees with a new punishment what it could scarcely see with sound counsel. And indeed, what had the remaining members done to thee, when thou didst laniate, when thou didst torture, when thou didst rack, when thou didst immanely feed upon all with lupine bites? With his mouth he had offended thee, with his mouth he had upbraided thee, with his mouth he confuted the shamelessness of thy face. The silent members had done nothing.

Why then does that which has admitted no fault sustain punishment? Why is that which has not harmed being harmed? Why is that which has not transgressed being avenged? If thou wishest therefore to bring forth the vigor of thy strict sentence against the guilty one, let the word be examined, let the word be judged, let the word be tortured with blows. And what more shall I say? Let the soul of the tongue, which shall have sinned, itself die. But what does it profit, if thou exercisest vengeance upon him in whom thou canst not restrain the cause of vengeance? For if thou crushest the fleshy mouth, there is one who inwardly fashions another, which indeed thou mayest hear, but canst punish with no animadversion; namely, he who says to his disciples: "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and contradict (Luke XXI)." He, I say, who says: "It is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you (Matth. X)."

But again he is shut in a horrific prison, he is hindered by a very heavy weight of chains, he is stretched on the wood, he is deprived of all sustenance of food. Indeed, for binding him the prison would altogether suffice, even if the chain were lacking; but for punishing him the punishment of fire would suffice, even if the want of hunger ceased. But he from whom earthly food is withdrawn is nourished by heavenly feasts. And the sustenance which the impiety of the judge denies, the bounty of God administers. And what the jailer does not grant, an angel, having become a servant of man, exhibits. For the angel of the Lord, coming to him by night, fed and comforted him while the guards were watching. With what delicious hunger is he afflicted, who is satiated with the dainties of the heavenly storehouse, for whom heaven becomes a cellar, and the heavenly steward exhibits his service. How happily miserable is he, who while he lacks earthly expenses, is supported by angelic obsequies; to whom a gift is sent from heaven, and an angelic one is ministered.

Sed o quam pulchrum spectaculum, et quanta spectantium admiratione dignissimum! cum tam strenue dux imperatorem sequitur, martyr regem imitatur. Quis enim posset ab illius spectaculi visione satiatus abscedere, si ad videndum quod non videbatur, clarum mentis oculum potuisset habere, cum cerneret invictissimum bellatorem Christi, in carceris horrore conclusum, quem tam alacriter exspectabat splendidissima aula regni coelorum? Cum aspiceret civem coeli cum tanto triumpho de exsilio ad patriam revocari? Cum videret Christi militem, tam potenter devicto mundo, regna siderea penetrantem? Verumtamen adhuc differtur, adhuc in exsilio retinetur; ut redeundi ad patriam magis ac magis desiderium augeatur. Non enim cessat adhuc diabolus per vasculum suum immaniter fremere, non cessat adhuc cruenta bestia totis malitiae suae viribus circa Christi martyrem insanire. Nam ecce iterum catenatus, sicut de carcere trahitur, in navi ponitur, 162 in exsilium mittitur, deinde tempestas oritur, navis frangitur, nautae omnes naufragio moriuntur: beatus martyr cum tribus suis clericis et duobus militibus liberatur.

Quid est hoc, Messaline? Cur iterum insanis? Cur iterum desipis? Et amisso rationis consilio, quid irrationabiliter facias, non attendis? Eia, rogo, dic mihi, quis potest exsulem in exsilium mittere, quis peregrinum peregre destinare? Antiochenus potest de Ravenna in exsilium dirigi? Orientalis de occiduis finibus deportari? Sed dum facis exsulem, significas civem. Et cum jure postliminii reversus fuerit, in urbanae conditionis titulos, quibus deportatus fuerat, legibus remeabit. Et certe si vir sanctus exsilium timuisset, Ravennam usque de Antiochia non venisset. Postremo quem longius ire compellis, cur catenarum nexibus non absolvis? Si vis tenere, cur mittitur? Si vis mittere, cur ligatur? maxime cum catenae tuae non magis nexibus ligent, quam ponderibus gravent? Econtra, ubi mare detumescit, tu inflaris; ubi ventus vim temperat, tu spiras; ubi Eurus cessat, tu sufflas, quem procella metuit mergere, tu non dubitas in equuleo sublevare, quem frigida vix audet unda perfundere, tu non times aquis ferventibus elixare. Furor tuus omnium belluarum excedit saevitiam. Stoliditas tua ipsam insensibilium rerum exsuperat ignorantiam. Interroga nautas tuos, disce furores tuos.

But oh, what a beautiful spectacle, and how worthy of the greatest admiration of those watching! when the leader follows the Emperor so strenuously, the martyr imitates the King. For who could depart from the vision of that spectacle satisfied, if he could have had a clear eye of the mind to see what was not seen, when he perceived the most invincible warrior of Christ shut in the horror of the prison, whom the most splendid hall of the kingdom of heaven was so eagerly expecting? When he saw a citizen of heaven being recalled with such great triumph from exile to his fatherland? When he saw the soldier of Christ, having so powerfully conquered the world, penetrating the starry realms? Nevertheless, he is still delayed, he is still retained in exile; so that the desire of returning to the fatherland may be increased more and more. For the devil does not yet cease to rage immanely through his little vessel, the bloody beast does not yet cease to rave with all the strength of his malice around the martyr of Christ. For behold, again chained, as he is dragged from the prison, he is placed in a ship, sent into exile; then a storm arises, the ship is broken, all the sailors die in the shipwreck: the blessed martyr with three of his clerics and two soldiers is delivered.

What is this, Messalinus? Why dost thou again rave? Why dost thou again lose thy senses? And having lost the counsel of reason, dost thou not attend to what thou doest irrationally? Come, I pray, tell me, who can send an exile into exile, who can destine a pilgrim to a foreign land? Can one from Antioch be directed from Ravenna into exile? Can an Oriental be deported from the western borders? But while thou makest him an exile, thou signifiest him a citizen. And when he shall have returned by the right of postliminium, he will return by the laws to the titles of urban condition from which he had been deported. And certainly, if the holy man had feared exile, he would not have come from Antioch as far as Ravenna. Finally, why dost thou not absolve from the bonds of chains him whom thou compellest to go further? If thou wishest to hold him, why is he sent? If thou wishest to send him, why is he bound? especially since thy chains do not bind with bonds more than they weigh down with weights. On the contrary, where the sea subsides, thou art inflated; where the wind tempers its force, thou breathest; where the East wind ceases, thou blowest; him whom the storm feared to submerge, thou dost not hesitate to lift up on the rack; him whom the cold wave scarcely dares to drench, thou dost not fear to boil in glowing waters. Thy fury exceeds the cruelty of all beasts. Thy stolidity surpasses the very ignorance of insensible things. Question thy sailors, learn thy furies.

Ecce, ubi ipsi vix tandem laborando solutis brachiis pereunt, nostri ligati jacendo et absque ulla molestia sui laboris evadunt. Milites autem, et si non pereunt, tibi tamen funditus pereunt. Nam jure dicendi fideles transfugae, utpote venientes ad fidem, abjuratis praesidis armis, sequuntur militiam exsulis. Aiunt enim ad eum milites: Domine Pater, quo ibimus? Quid faciemus? Quibus ait: Baptizamini in nomine Jesu, et vivetis. Qui statim renuntiantes idolis, baptizati sunt in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti.

Nos autem, fratres dilectissimi, qui veritatem iterum Deo auctore, cognovimus; qui tot virtutum insignia prae oculis posita, ad exemplum imitationis habemus, studeamus ad illam beatitudinem omni desiderio tendere, in qua jam novimus triumphatores mundi de laborum suorum remuneratione gaudere. Eorum vestigia teneamus in via, quorum societatem habere desideramus in patria. Profecto illic erimus quod sunt, si hic fuerimus quod fuerunt. Nam si compatimur, et conregnabimus, si commorimur, et convivemus (II Tim. I). «Et si complantati facti sumus similitudini mortis Domini, simul et resurrectionis erimus (Rom. VI).»

Non ergo dividamur in itinere, si jungi volumus in perventione. Non abhorreat momentaneae potionis amaritudinem bibere, qui ad perpetuae incolumitatis dulcedinem desiderat pervenire. Qui vult ascribi inter milites Christi, nunc se accingat viriliter ad conflictum, ut post peractam militiam beatae quietis accipiat municipatum; nunc se praeparet congredi, ut merito valeat post victoriam coronari: «Non enim coronabitur, ni qui legitime certaverit (I Tim. II).» Nam delicatus 163 est miles, qui prius vult vincere, quam incipiat dimicare; qui vult sine pugna victoriam, aut sine victoria anhelat ad palmam. Stultus est agricola, qui vult turgentes uvarum botros de vite suaviter carpere, et negligit propaginum surculos laboriose plantare; cupit implere frugibus horreum, non curans excolere inhorrescentem vepribus agrum. Sic, fratres mei dilectissimi, angustam nobis expedit, et asperi laboris viam cum sanctis in hoc saeculo carpere, si postmodum volumus ad eorum gaudii latitudinem pervenire. Qui enim dicit se in Christo manere, debet, sicut ille ambulavit, et ipse ambulare (Joan. II). Procul dubio autem a vestigiis Christi exorbitat, qui angustam fugiens, latitudinis viam calcat: «Per multas enim tribulationes oportet nos introire in regnum Dei (Act. XIV).»

Behold, where they themselves scarcely at last by laboring with loosened arms perish, ours, bound by lying still and without any molestation of their labor, escape. But the soldiers, even if they do not perish, yet to thee they perish utterly. For being by right called faithful converts, as those coming to the faith, having abjured the arms of the governor, they follow the warfare of the exile. For the soldiers say to him: Lord Father, whither shall we go? What shall we do? To whom he said: Be baptized in the name of Jesus, and you shall live. Who immediately renouncing idols, were baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

But we, most beloved brothers, who have again known the truth, God being the author; who have so many marks of virtues set before our eyes as an example of imitation, let us study to tend with all desire toward that beatitude in which we already know the triumphers of the world to rejoice in the remuneration of their labors. Let us keep their footsteps in the way, whose society we desire to have in the fatherland. Truly we shall be there what they are, if here we shall have been what they were. For if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; if we die with him, we shall also live with him (II Tim. II). "And if we have been planted together in the likeness of the death of the Lord, we shall be also together in the likeness of his resurrection (Rom. VI)."

Let us not therefore be divided in the journey, if we wish to be joined in the arrival. Let him not abhor to drink the bitterness of the momentary potion, who desires to arrive at the sweetness of perpetual health. He who wishes to be enrolled among the soldiers of Christ, let him now gird himself manfully for the conflict, so that after the completed warfare he may receive the citizenship of blessed rest; let him now prepare himself to engage, so that he may deservedly be able to be crowned after the victory: "For he shall not be crowned, unless he shall have striven lawfully (II Tim. II)." For he is a delicate soldier who wishes to conquer before he begins to fight; who wishes for victory without a fight, or without victory pants for the palm. Foolish is the farmer who wishes to pluck the swelling clusters of grapes sweetly from the vine, and neglects to plant the shoots of the layers with labor; he desires to fill the granary with fruits, not caring to cultivate the field bristling with briars. So, my most beloved brothers, it behooves us to take the narrow way and the way of sharp labor with the saints in this world, if afterwards we wish to arrive at the latitude of their joy. For he who says he abides in Christ ought himself also to walk even as he walked (I John II). But without doubt he wanders from the footsteps of Christ who, fleeing the narrow way, treads the way of latitude: "For through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God (Acts XIV)."

Ecce, B. Apollinaris, cujus hodie nos festiva dies illuxit, non terrenos honores voluit, non fallaces divitias congregavit, non mundi gloriam petiit, non transitoriae possessionis praedia dilatavit; propinquos sprevit, patriam dereliquit, semetipsum quoque funditus abnegavit; ad extremum quoque per ferrum, per gladios, per tela, per ignes, per morosas et innumeras mortes regna siderea penetravit. Sic in sanctis luce clarius manifestatur, quod per Veritatem in Evangelio dicitur: «Quia regnum coelorum vim patitur, et violenti diripiunt illud (Matth. XI).»

Neque tamen hoc dicimus, ut illi solummodo coelestibus digni praemiis habeantur, qui persecutorum gladiis feriuntur. Saepe enim multi perfectae et laudabilis vitae viri toto mentis desiderio ad martyrii voluerunt culmen attingere; sed quia divina providentia aliter sensit, in suo gradu coacti sunt remanere; qui etiamsi nequaquam fuerint per martyrium consummati, a martyrii tamen gloria minime sunt alieni. Nam et sancti discipuli B. Apollinaris, Adheritus videlicet et Calocerus, Marcianus et Eleuchadius, licet nequaquam carnificum gladio sint percussi, a martyrii tamen desiderio nullatenus creduntur fuisse extranei, sed omnipotens Deus, qui eos ante saecula clementer elegit, in quo voluit ordine, profunda consilii sui dispensatione constituit; quae quamvis sit nobis occulta, nullo modo tamen credi debet injusta; quamvis sit incomprehensibilis, nullo modo tamen censenda reprehensibilis. Sic architectus cum parietem domus aedificat, alios lapides in imis aequaliter construit, alios in summis artificiosa sublimitate componit. Sed dum illi superius eminent, isti inferius jacent, concordi diversitate unum simul parietem complent. Sic peritus artifex cum aurea, vel argentea vasa componit, aliis diversas sculpturas et imagines imprimit, alia vero solummodo polita ex studio derelinquit; ut dum in his, hoc est simplicibus, naturalis color clarius rutilat; in illis vero, id est, anaglyphis, anaglyphi sculptoris ingenium ars studiosa commendat, spectantium oculos pulchra ad se rerum varietas trahat. Indumentorum quoque regalium alia videntur conchylii, vel muricis sanguineo rubore perfusa, alia vero nivei coloris nitore candentia.

Behold, blessed Apollinaris, whose festive day has dawned for us today, did not wish for earthly honors, did not congregate fallacious riches, did not seek the glory of the world, did not dilate the estates of transitory possession; he despised relatives, he left his fatherland, he also utterly denied himself; at the end also through iron, through swords, through weapons, through fires, through lingering and innumerable deaths, he penetrated the starry realms. Thus in the saints it is manifested more clearly than light, what is said by the Truth in the Gospel: "That the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force (Matth. XI)."

Neither yet do we say this, that those only should be held worthy of heavenly rewards who are struck by the swords of persecutors. For often many men of a perfect and laudable life have wished with all the desire of the mind to reach the summit of martyrdom; but because divine providence felt otherwise, they were compelled to remain in their own rank; who, even if they were by no means consummated by martyrdom, are yet least of all strangers to the glory of martyrdom. For the holy disciples of blessed Apollinaris also, namely Adheritus and Calocerus, Marcianus and Eleuchadius, although they were by no means struck by the sword of executioners, are yet believed to have been in no way strangers to the desire of martyrdom, but almighty God, who mercifully chose them before the ages, established them in what order he wished, by the profound dispensation of his counsel; which although it is hidden from us, yet ought in no way to be believed unjust; although it is incomprehensible, yet is in no way to be judged reprehensible. So an architect, when he builds the wall of a house, constructs some stones equally in the lowest parts, others he composes in the highest parts with crafty sublimity. But while those project above, these lie below, and by a harmonious diversity they complete one wall together. So the skilled artisan, when he composes golden or silver vessels, impresses various sculptures and images on some, but leaves others only polished out of study; so that while in these, that is the simple ones, the natural color shines more brightly; in those, however, that is the embossed ones, studious art commends the genius of the sculptor of the embossed work, and the beautiful variety of things draws the eyes of the onlookers to itself. Of royal garments also, some are seen suffused with the blood-red redness of shell-fish or murex, but others are shining with the brightness of a snowy color.

Sed dum ex propria qualitate inter se admodum differunt, unam tamen dignitatem de eo, quod communiter contegunt, corpore regis trahunt. Sic nimirum, sic omnipotens Deus dum electos suos ad unius felicitatis gradum provehit, Ecclesiae suae corpus per varia membrorum lineamenta distinguit. Hinc est enim, quod per Apostolum dicitur: «Ipse dedit quosdam quidem apostolos, quosdam autem prophetas, alios vero evangelistas, alios autem pastores et doctores, ad consummationem sanctorum, in opus ministerii, in aedificationem corporis Christi (Ephes. IV).» Sed licet varia sit diversitas transeuntium, una tamen est via, per quam transitur: illa nimirum, quam Veritas se sequentibus sternebat, cum diceret: «Angusta est via, quae ducit ad vitam; et pauci sunt, qui ingrediantur per eam (Matth. VII).» Hanc viam ipse Dominus tenuit; per hanc quicunque eum sequi voluerit, incedere jussit. Hanc viam sancti martyres omni studio tenuerunt, antequam ad martyrium pertingere meruissent. Angustam quippe viam perfecte tenere est voluntates proprias in omnibus frangere, et majoris imperio humiliter obedire. Quisquis autem per proprii arbitrii latitudinem defluit, pedem mentis ab angustae viae semita declinavit. Sed tanto per hanc suum iter plenius dirigit, quanto se arctius in ligno cordis clavis obedientiae crucifigit.

Sed quia ad aedificationem nostram, dilectissimi, hujus tam praecipuae virtutis exemplum ponere volumus, quia de nullo citius occurrit, hinc de quo agitur, B. Apollinarem ad medium deducamus. Ut enim jam audistis, in ipso gestorum illius narratur exordio, quia B. Petrus apostolus ait Apollinari discipulo suo: Quid sedes nobiscum? Ecce eruditus es de omnibus quae fecit Jesus. Surge, accipe Spiritum sanctum, simulque pontificatum, et perge ad urbem quae vocatur Ravenna. Multitudo enim populi illic moratur, praedica eis de nomine Jesu, et ne formidaveris. Et paulo post subjungitur: Et osculans eum, emisit a se. Perpendite, fratres mei, quam libera in magistro praecipiendi auctoritas, quam devota in discipulo obediendi humilitas: quam promptus ille fuit ad imponendum imperii jugum, quam iste paratus exstitit ad submittendum obedientiae collum. Ille jussionis suae severitatem blandiendo non temperat, ille tanti laboris subire sarcinam non recusat.

But while they differ much among themselves from their own quality, yet they draw one dignity from the body of the king, which they commonly cover. So indeed, so almighty God, while he promotes his elect to the degree of one happiness, distinguishes the body of his Church through various lineaments of members. For hence it is that it is said by the Apostle: "He gave some indeed apostles, and some prophets, and others evangelists, and others pastors and teachers, for the consummation of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ (Ephes. IV)." But although the diversity of those passing through is various, yet there is one way through which they pass: that indeed which Truth was spreading for those following him, when he said: "Narrow is the way which leads to life; and few there are who enter through it (Matth. VII)." This way the Lord himself held; through this he commanded whosoever should wish to follow him to walk. This way the holy martyrs held with all study, before they had merited to reach martyrdom. For to hold the narrow way perfectly is to break one's own wills in all things, and to obey the command of a superior humbly. But whosoever flows down through the latitude of his own judgment has turned the foot of the mind away from the path of the narrow way. But he directs his journey the more fully through this, the more closely he crucifies himself on the wood of the heart with the nails of obedience.

But because for our edification, most beloved, we wish to set an example of this so excellent virtue, because it occurs from no one more quickly, let us bring forth to the middle blessed Apollinaris, of whom we are treating. For as you have already heard, in the very beginning of his deeds it is related that blessed Peter the apostle said to Apollinaris his disciple: Why sittest thou with us? Behold, thou art instructed concerning all the things which Jesus did. Arise, receive the Holy Spirit, and at the same time the pontificate, and go to the city which is called Ravenna. For a multitude of people dwells there; preach to them of the name of Jesus, and be not afraid. And a little after it is subjoined: And kissing him, he sent him forth from himself. Consider, my brothers, how free the authority of commanding in the master, how devoted the humility of obeying in the disciple: how prompt was he to impose the yoke of command, how prepared did this one stand to submit the neck of obedience. That one does not temper the severity of his command by flattering; this one does not refuse to undergo the burden of so great labor.

Solent mundana eloquentia eruditi locutionem suam rhetorici coloris suavitate componere, et quaeque difficilia, cum volunt, blandis et exquisitis verbis levia demonstrare, ut si quando grave aliquid imperant, auditorem ad sua vota convertant. Beatus vero apostolus non blanda verba composuit, non rei eventum prosperum repromisit, sed rem difficilem simpliciter imperavit. Inter haec illud etiam ad mentem redit, quod Dominus Abrahae dissimile quidem, sed non dissimiliter jussit: «Tolle, inquit, filium tuum, quem diligis Isaac, et offer illum mihi in holocaustum (Gen. XXI).» Sufficeret namque Domino dicere, tolle filium tuum; sed adjungit, quem diligis Isaac, ut reducta patri ad aures dilectione filii, probaretur in animo quantus viveret amor Dei; quatenus audita dilectio filii paternum pectus accenderet; sed rursus exsuperante divini amoris flamma, semetipsum obedientiae gladio mactans, in ara cordis verius immolaret. Hoc etiam modo beatus apostolus cum discipulo suo diceret: Perge Ravennam, ac si terrorem sibi vellet incutere, protinus addidit: Multitudo enim populi illic moratur.

Poterat autem B. Apollinaris magistro suo verbi hujusmodi respondere: Multitudinem populi dicis, et unum contra multitudinem dirigis. Multa esse hostium agmina ipse non negas; et unum inermem hominem contra eos mittere non formidas? Quomodo pugnabit nuda lingua unius hominis adversus armatas manus adversariae multitudinis? Quid poterit imbellis peregrini persona adversus tot frementium civium agmina? Non bene coaequatur pugna, ubi ex una lingua jaciuntur verba, et ex innumeris manibus incutiuntur verbera: ubi hinc emittuntur sermones, inde evolant vectes. Saltem unum mihi socium dares, solatium tam irremeabilis peregrinationis, vel etiam ipsius praedicationis adjutorem impenderes. Nam et ipse magister tuus Dominus Jesus Christus cum vos ad praedicandum mitteret semper, prout opus erat, vobis solatium adhibebat. Evangelista quoque, qui illum septuaginta duos destinasse ad praedicandum narrat, non unos, sed binos ante faciem suam misisse pronuntiat (Luc. X).

Haec, et multa hujusmodi excusationis verba beatus martyr potuisset obtendere, si indomita cervice mentis, jugum voluisset obedientiae detractare. Verumtamen non restitit, non contradixit; sed mox, ut jubentis accepit imperium, omnino credidit necessarium, quod sibi per os magistri ab ipso Domino cognovit injunctum.

Those erudite in worldly eloquence are accustomed to compose their speech with the sweetness of rhetorical color, and to demonstrate whatever difficult things, when they wish, as light with flattering and exquisite words, so that if ever they command anything heavy, they may convert the listener to their desires. But the blessed apostle did not compose flattering words, he did not promise a prosperous outcome of the matter, but simply commanded a difficult thing. Among these things that also returns to the mind, which the Lord commanded to Abraham indeed dissimilarly, but not dissimilarly: "Take," he said, "thy son, whom thou lovest, Isaac, and offer him to me for a holocaust (Gen. XXI)." For it would suffice for the Lord to say, take thy son; but he adds, whom thou lovest, Isaac, so that the love of the son having been brought back to the ears of the father, it might be proved in the soul how great a love of God lived there; so that the heard love of the son might kindle the paternal breast; but again the flame of divine love surpassing it, slaying himself with the sword of obedience, he might more truly immolate him on the altar of the heart. In this way also the blessed apostle, when he said to his disciple: Go to Ravenna, as if he wished to strike terror into him, immediately added: For a multitude of people dwells there.

But blessed Apollinaris could have responded to his master with a word of this kind: Thou speakest of a multitude of people, and thou directest one man against a multitude. Thou thyself dost not deny that the companies of enemies are many; and art thou not afraid to send one unarmed man against them? How shall the naked tongue of one man fight against the armed hands of an opposing multitude? What shall the person of a weak stranger be able to do against so many companies of raging citizens? The fight is not well matched, where words are cast from one tongue, and blows are struck from innumerable hands: where from here sermons are sent forth, from there bars fly out. At least thou mightest give me one companion, a solace for so irremediable a pilgrimage, or even spend an assistant for that same preaching. For thy master himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, when he sent you to preach, always, as there was need, provided solace for you. The Evangelist also, who relates that he destined seventy-two to preach, pronounces that he sent them not by ones, but by twos before his face (Luke X).

These, and many words of excuse of this kind, the blessed martyr could have held out, if with an untamed neck of the mind he had wished to refuse the yoke of obedience. Nevertheless he did not resist, he did not contradict; but as soon as he received the command of the one ordering, he believed it altogether necessary, which he knew was enjoined upon him through the mouth of the master by the Lord himself.

Et ut per omnia in virtute obedientiae B. Apollinaris Abrahae similis videatur, sicut illi Deus praecepit, dicens: «Exi de terra tua, et de cognatione tua, et de domo patris tui, et veni in terram, quam monstravero tibi (Gen. XII),» qui nihil haesitans paruit; sic et iste mox, ut verba apostolicae jussionis accepit, protinus ad obediendum spe certa animum roboravit. Et quod docturus erat verbo, operis praemonstravit exemplo. Hoc denique studuit humiliter exhibere subjectis, quod juste accepturus erat, et ipse praelatus. Et, sicut de Domino legitur «prius coepit facere et postea docere (Act. I);» ut in semetipso expertus disceret, qualiter accepta potestatis auctoritate, aliis imperaret.

Sed quam pulcher divinae dispensationis ordo cognoscitur, si hujus rei dignitas pro sui merito studiose pensetur. Nam, qui ab Adam primum inobedientiae vitium male instructi didicimus, primam obedientiae virtutem ab hoc beatissimo martyre edocti sumus. Et sicut ille inter caetera vitiorum germina primam inobedientiam, non loquendo, sed praevaricando, carnalem sobolem docuit; ita iste inter alia documenta virtutum, inprimis obedientiam, non loquendo, sed faciendo, filios spirituales instruxit. Qui ergo inobediendo a supernae patriae sublimitate cecidimus, ad hanc versis vestigiis per obedientiam de exsilii dejectione redimus. Hinc est enim, quod per Veritatem dicitur: «Omne, quod dat mihi Pater, ad me veniet; et eum, qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras (Joan. VI).» Qui enim ad primum Adam veniunt, ab intimis exire per inobedientiam discunt. Secundus vero Adam «factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis (Philip. II),» in eo, quod ad se venientibus exemplum obedientiae tribuit, eos a paradisi gaudiis non expellit.

Ad haec gaudia, dilectissimi, redire festinemus, non passibus pedum, sed bonorum profectibus operum. Nondum saeculum fortasse reliquimus, nondum abrenuntiatorum more, unum prae cunctis, cui obedire debeamus, elegimus: hanc tamen virtutem, per quam praecipue ad coelum reditur, obedientiam dico, habere cum Dei adjutorio possumus. Neque enim de abrenuntiatoribus Saul fuerat, qui ab irato contra eum Samuele audiebat: «Nunquid vult Dominus holocausta et victimas, et non potius, ut obediatur voci Domini? Melior est enim obedientia, quam victimae (II Reg. XV).»

Quisquis ergo perfecte vis hanc habere virtutem, esto obediens Deo, nec tamen sis inobediens proximo. Vis audire qualiter obedias Deo? Cave quod prohibet; imple quod jubet. Neque enim unum sine altero valet esse perfectum. Vis etiam audire qualiter obedias proximo?

And so that in all things in the virtue of obedience blessed Apollinaris might seem like Abraham, just as God commanded him, saying: "Go out from thy land, and from thy kindred, and from the house of thy father, and come into the land which I shall show thee (Gen. XII)," who without anything hesitating obeyed; so also this one, as soon as he received the words of the apostolic command, immediately strengthened his mind with certain hope for obeying. And what he was about to teach by word, he demonstrated beforehand by the example of deed. This finally he studied to exhibit humbly to his subjects, which he himself as a prelate was justly about to receive. And, as it is read of the Lord "he began first to do and afterwards to teach (Acts I);" so that having experienced it in himself, he might learn how, the authority of power having been received, he should command others.

But how beautiful an order of divine dispensation is recognized, if the dignity of this thing is studiously weighed according to its merit. For we, who being ill-instructed learned from Adam the first vice of disobedience, have been taught the first virtue of obedience by this most blessed martyr. And just as that one, among the other seeds of vices, taught his carnal offspring the first disobedience, not by speaking but by prevaricating; so this one, among other documents of virtues, instructed his spiritual sons in obedience first of all, not by speaking but by doing. We therefore who by disobeying fell from the sublimity of the supernal fatherland, return to it with turned footsteps through obedience from the dejection of exile. For hence it is that it is said by the Truth: "All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and him that comes to me, I will not cast out (John VI)." For those who come to the first Adam learn to go out from the innermost parts through disobedience. But the second Adam, "having become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philip. II)," in that he grants an example of obedience to those coming to him, does not expel them from the joys of paradise.

To these joys, most beloved, let us hasten to return, not with the steps of the feet, but with the progress of good works. Perhaps we have not yet left the world, we have not yet chosen, after the manner of those who have renounced it, one before all others whom we ought to obey: yet this virtue, through which especially one returns to heaven, I mean obedience, we can have with the help of God. For Saul had not been among those who had renounced it, who heard from Samuel angry against him: "Does the Lord wish holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord be obeyed? For better is obedience than victims (I Kings XV)."

Whosoever therefore thou art who wishest to have this virtue perfectly, be obedient to God, yet be not disobedient to thy neighbor. Wishest thou to hear how thou mayest obey God? Beware of what he prohibits; fulfill what he commands. For neither one without the other is able to be perfect. Wishest thou also to hear how thou mayest obey thy neighbor?

Cum te frater tuus videt in aliquod vitium delabentem, et corripit te in bono opere tepidum, et ad fervorem te verbis charitativae exhortationis accendit, si non resistis, si non contradicis, sed humiliter audis, et te ad id quod vocaris, accingis, mox reditum tuum ad patriam, unde inobediens dejectus fueras, per virtutem obedientiae reformabis. Hoc itaque modo etiam si non vales pro Deo mortem subire, vales tamen vitam Deo placabilem ducere. Magnum quippe est mori pro Christo, sed non est inferius vivere Christo. Utrumque enim statera Paulus aequa lance pendebat, cum diceret: «Sive enim vivimus, Domino vivimus; sive morimur, Domino morimur. Sive ergo vivimus, sive morimur, Domini sumus (Rom. XIV).» Dicis mihi, quia non possum invenire martyrium; exhibe te martyrio dignum, et martyrii consequeris procul dubio praemium. Non potes sanguinem fundere, potes temetipsum poenitentiae telo percutere, et in cordis contritione mactare. Praeparetur ad feriendum jugulus, non deerit remunerator, etiamsi defuerit gladius. Deest carnifex, qui cervices exterius feriat; adest Judex, qui bonae voluntati praemium reddat. «Gloria enim in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis (Luc. II).» Amen.

Sermo XXXIII.

DE S. CHRISTOPHORO MARTYRE (XXV JUL.).

Dum cupimus, dilectissimi, de triumphali B. Christophori martyris victoria disputare, primo nobis ejus nomen occurrit: quod si sollicita, prout dignum est, indagatione discutimus, non in fine divini dispensatione praesagii sibi tunc inditum reperimus. A Christo nimirum Christophorus derivatur. Unde sponsa dilecto suo dicit in Canticis. «Oleum effusum nomen tuum (Cant. I);» Chrisma scilicet, unde Christus unctio dicitur. Per oleum vero sanctus Spiritus mystice designatur. Hoc oleo Salvator noster principaliter unctus est, cum baptismi sacramenta suscepit, 167 et mox super eum Spiritus sanctus in columbae figura descendit (Matth. III). Unde per Prophetam dicitur: «Unxit te Deus, Deus tuus, in oleo laetitiae (Psal. XLIV).» Hoc oleum effusum est cum gratia sancti Spiritus, quam singulariter Christus accepit, electis omnibus dispensativa sui participatione concessit. Quamobrem dicit Apostolus: «Unicuique nostrum data est gratia secundum mensuram donationis Christi (Ephes. IV).»

When thy brother sees thee sliding into some vice, and rebukes thee as tepid in a good work, and kindles thee to fervor with words of charitable exhortation, if thou dost not resist, if thou dost not contradict, but humbly hearest, and girdest thyself for that to which thou art called, thou shalt soon reform thy return to the fatherland, whence as disobedient thou hadst been cast down, through the virtue of obedience. In this way therefore, even if thou art not able to undergo death for God, thou art yet able to lead a life pleasing to God. For it is a great thing to die for Christ, but it is not inferior to live for Christ. For both these Paul weighed with an equal balance of the scale when he said: "For whether we live, we live to the Lord; or whether we die, we die to the Lord. Whether therefore we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's (Rom. XIV)." Thou sayest to me: because I cannot find martyrdom; exhibit thyself worthy of martyrdom, and thou shalt without doubt obtain the reward of martyrdom. Thou canst not pour out blood, thou canst strike thyself with the weapon of penance, and immolate thyself in contrition of heart. Let the throat be prepared for striking, the remunerator will not be lacking, even if the sword should be lacking. The executioner is lacking who may strike the neck outwardly; the Judge is present who may render the reward to a good will. "For glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will (Luke II)." Amen.

Sermon XXXIII.

ON ST. CHRISTOPHER, MARTYR (JULY 25).

While we desire, most beloved, to dispute concerning the triumphal victory of the blessed martyr Christopher, first his name occurs to us: which if we discuss with solicitous investigation, as is worthy, we find it was not given to him at the end without the dispensation of a divine presage. For Christopher is derived from Christ. Wherefore the bride says to her beloved in the Canticles. "Thy name is as oil poured out (Cant. I);" namely Chrism, from which Christ is called unction. For by oil the Holy Spirit is mystically designated. With this oil our Savior was principally anointed, when he received the sacraments of baptism, and soon the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the figure of a dove (Matth. III). Wherefore it is said by the Prophet: "God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness (Psal. XLIV)." This oil was poured out with the grace of the Holy Spirit, which Christ received singularly, and granted to all the elect by a dispensative participation of himself. Wherefore the Apostle says: "To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ (Ephes. IV)."

Unde et a Christo dicimur Christiani, quoniam eodem oleo sumus, ipso largiente, peruncti. Hoc unguentum et David promittebat, cum diceret: «Sicut unguentum in capite, quod descendit in barbam, barbam Aaron; qui descendit in oram vestimenti ejus (Psal. CXXXII).» Unguentum scilicet in capite Spiritus sanctus est in Salvatore, qui nimirum per Aaron mystice designatur, qui mons fortitudinis dicitur. Cum igitur Aaron mons sit fortitudinis, barba quoque signum est virilitatis. Hujus ergo Aaron barba sancti apostoli sunt, qui virilitatis suae robore, quod de sancti Spiritus unctione conceperant, omnia furentium persecutorum bella vicerunt, et mundi principem tanquam leonem adversus oves Christi immaniter rugientem, cum gloria triumpharunt. Unde Petrus: «Cui resistite, inquit, fortes in fide (I Petr. V).» Paulus etiam dicit: «Arma militiae nostrae non carnalia, sed potentia Deo sunt ad destructionem munitionum, consilia corporis destruentes, et omnem altitudinem extollentem se adversus scientiam Dei, et in captivitatem redigentes omnem intellectum in obsequium Christi (II Cor. X).»

Ab hac ergo barba summi pontificis Aaron unguentum in oram vestimenti ejus instillat; quia post beatos apostolos, consequenter et sanctos martyres, ac deinceps totam simul Ecclesiam, fluento sancti Spiritus irrigat. In qua nimirum ora mystici ac sacerdotalis indumenti B. Christophorus, hoc est, Christum ferens, meruit nuncupari. Christum scilicet ferebat in corde, Christum proferebat in voce. Gratiae siquidem coelestis oleo delibutus, et onerosa terrenae concupiscentiae veste nudatus, tanquam palaestrita mirabilis prosilit in arenam, et arripit certaminis luctam. Novus adhuc miles corripit gladium spiritus, quod est verbum Dei (Ephes. VI), et protinus in bella congreditur, et sic adversus humani generis inimicum infoederabili certamine colluctatur. Vibrat ancipitem gladium, qui de Salvatoris ore procedit, et fervidus bellator cum hoste committit, consertis armis cominus dimicat, et obvia quaeque mens superbas adversantium hostium cervices obtruncat. Fidei quippe lorica munitus, et excelsa non montis sed mentis arce subnixus, licet undique fremat ac frendeat acies hostium, nescit athleta fortissimus impetum formidare bellorum; et exterioribus quidem suppliciis corpus exponit, sed homo, qui latet interior, illatae persecutionis jaculum non admittit. Terram repromissionis ingredi properat, sed huic in persequentium rabie veternosi hostis phalanges occurrunt, qui tamen ejus iter dum impedire nituntur, expediunt. Nam, dum parant obruere, corruunt; dum occidere conantur, intereunt; dum intorquent jacula, jaculis acrioribus transfiguntur.

Whence also we are called Christians from Christ, because we are anointed with the same oil, he himself bestowing it. This ointment David also promised, when he said: "As the ointment on the head, which descended into the beard, the beard of Aaron; which descended into the hem of his garment (Psal. CXXXII)." Namely, the ointment on the head is the Holy Spirit in the Savior, who indeed is mystically designated by Aaron, who is called the mountain of strength. Since therefore Aaron is the mountain of strength, the beard also is a sign of virility. The beard of this Aaron, therefore, are the holy apostles, who by the strength of their virility, which they had conceived from the unction of the Holy Spirit, conquered all the wars of the raging persecutors, and triumphed with glory over the prince of the world as over a lion raging immanely against the sheep of Christ. Wherefore Peter says: "Whom resist ye, strong in faith (I Pet. V)." Paul also says: "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but powerful to God for the destruction of fortifications, destroying the counsels of the body, and every height exalting itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ (II Cor. X)."

From this beard, therefore, of the high priest Aaron, the ointment drips into the hem of his garment; because after the blessed apostles, consequently he waters both the holy martyrs, and thereafter the whole Church at once, with the flow of the Holy Spirit. In which hem indeed of the mystical and priestly garment blessed Christopher, that is, bearing Christ, merited to be named. For he bore Christ in his heart, he brought forth Christ in his voice. Anointed indeed with the oil of heavenly grace, and stripped of the burdensome garment of earthly concupiscence, like a wonderful wrestler he leaps forth into the arena, and seizes the struggle of the contest. Still a new soldier, he seizes the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God (Ephes. VI), and immediately engages in wars, and thus struggles against the enemy of the human race in an unleagueable contest. He vibrates the two-edged sword which proceeds from the mouth of the Savior, and the fervent warrior joins battle with the enemy, fights at close quarters with joined arms, and every mind cuts off the proud necks of the opposing enemies. Fortified indeed with the breastplate of faith, and supported by the high fortress not of a mountain but of the mind, although the battle line of the enemies rages and gnashes on every side, the most courageous athlete knows not how to fear the onset of wars; and indeed he exposes the body to external punishments, but the man who lies hidden within does not admit the dart of the inflicted persecution. He hastens to enter the land of promise, but the phalanxes of the ancient enemy occur to him in the madness of the persecutors, who yet, while they strive to impede his journey, expedite it. For, while they prepare to overwhelm him, they fall; while they attempt to kill him, they perish; while they hurl darts, they are transfixed by sharper darts.

Horum itaque loquentium, vel in amaritudinem adducentium Seon rex est, qui elatus asseritur, quia vaniloquis et amaris hujus mundi amatoribus diabolus auctor superbiae principatur. Unde et ipse princeps mundi dicitur, illius videlicet de quo dicit Joannes: «Mundus in maligno positus est (Joan. XII, XIV).» Et Dominus promittit illum discipulis Spiritum esse mittendum (I Joan. V), quem hic mundus non potest accipere (Joan. XIV). Dicit ergo Israel ad Seon: «Transire nos liceat per terram tuam, non declinabimus in agros et vineas (Num. XXI).» Nos plane, nos sumus, qui per hunc mundum ad terram cupimus transire viventium. Nos, inquam, per terminos superbi regis humiliter incedere volumus ad patriam divinae promissionis. Et quoniam Hebraeus interpretatur transiens, nos qui discipuli sumus illius qui non habitavit, sed pertransivit benefaciendo, et sanando omnes oppressos a diabolo (Act. X), quoniam Deus erat cum illo; nunquam nos habitaturos cum Seon rege promittimus, sed via tantummodo regia processuros nos esse spondemus. Sed quando nos regi Seon ista promisimus? Quando cohabitationi ejus repudium dedimus, quando divisionis aeternae foedus cum eo pacti sumus.

Recolamus itaque diem sacri baptismatis, ipsum novae regenerationis exordium ad memoriam reducamus; et ibi nos procul dubio renuntiasse diabolo ac cunctis ejus pompis et operibus inveniemus. Commemoret unusquisque fidelium cum primum ad fontem lavacri salutaris accessit, cum signacula fidei prima suscepit. Nonne per catechismum sacerdotalis officii his usus est verbis quibus se significaret letiferas mundi hujus cupiditates abjicere, ac diabolicae societatis contubernium profiteretur a se funditus abdicare? Et hoc est quod in historiae sermonibus adumbratur, quia non declinet Israel neque in agrum regis Seon, neque in vineam, neque de lacu ejus se pollicetur aliquo modo potaturum. Per agrum scilicet, operis exercitium; per vineam et lacum, vanarum artium intelligitur poculum; astrologiae scilicet, magiae, necromantiae, et quidquid est quod vanum aliquid vel sacrilegum dogmatizat contra catholicae fidei pietatem. De quibus utique pestilentibus poculis contra perversum populum per Jeremiam Dominus conqueritur, dicens: «Duo mala fecit populus meus: me dereliquerunt, fontem aquae vivae, et foderunt sibi cisternas, cisternas dissipatas, quae continere non valent aquas (Jer. II).» De quibus et per Salomonem dicitur: «Aquae furtivae dulciores sunt (Prov. VIII).» Habet autem Israel fontes suos. «In Ecclesiis, inquit, benedicite Deo Domino de fontibus Israel (Psal. LXVII).»

Of these, therefore, who speak or bring into bitterness, Sihon is the king, who is asserted to be 'elated,' because the devil, the author of pride, rules over the vain-speaking and bitter lovers of this world. Whence also he himself is called the prince of the world, namely of that of which John says: 'The world is seated in wickedness' (John 12, 14). And the Lord promises that the Spirit is to be sent to the disciples (1 John 5), whom this world cannot receive (John 14). Israel therefore says to Sihon: 'Let us pass through your land, we will not turn aside into the fields and vineyards' (Num. 21). We clearly, we are the ones who desire to pass through this world to the land of the living. We, I say, wish to walk humbly through the borders of the proud king to the homeland of divine promise. And since 'Hebrew' is interpreted as 'passing through,' we who are disciples of Him who did not dwell, but passed through doing good and healing all oppressed by the devil (Acts 10), because God was with Him; we promise that we will never dwell with King Sihon, but we pledge that we will proceed only by the royal road. But when did we promise these things to King Sihon? When we gave a repudiation to his cohabitation, when we struck a covenant of eternal division with him.

Let us recall, therefore, the day of holy baptism, let us bring back to memory the very beginning of the new regeneration; and there we shall undoubtedly find that we renounced the devil and all his pomps and works. Let each of the faithful commemorate when he first approached the font of the salutary laver, when he first received the signs of faith. Did he not, through the catechism of the priestly office, use these words by which he signified that he cast away the deadly desires of this world, and professed that he utterly abdicated the companionship of the diabolical society? And this is what is foreshadowed in the words of the history, because Israel does not turn aside either into the field of King Sihon, nor into the vineyard, nor does he promise to drink in any way from his cistern. By the field, indeed, is understood the exercise of work; by the vineyard and the cistern, the cup of vain arts; namely, of astrology, magic, necromancy, and whatever it is that dogmatizes anything vain or sacrilegious against the piety of the Catholic faith. Concerning which pestilential cups against the perverse people the Lord complains through Jeremiah, saying: 'My people have done two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have dug for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water' (Jer. 2). Concerning which it is also said through Solomon: 'Stolen waters are sweeter' (Prov. 8). But Israel has his own fountains. 'In the churches,' he says, 'bless God the Lord from the fountains of Israel' (Ps. 67).

Superbi ergo regis Seon aquas respuat, haereticorum dogmatum fluenta contemnat; et hauriat aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris (Isa. XII). Qui enim dirupit fontes et torrentes (Psal. LXXIII), hic in Evangelio dicit: «Qui biberit aquam quam ego do, flumina de ventre ejus fluent aquae vivae (Joan. VII).» Sed et via regia, sicut est pollicitus, gradiatur. «Via, inquit, regia gradiamur.» Quae est autem regia via, nisi illa quae dicit: «Ego sum via (Joan. XIV).» Qui etiam in ipso suae passionis articulo se regem perhibet, cum ait: «Tu dicis: Quia rex sum ego (Joan. XVIII).» Promisimus ergo superbo regi Seon ejus fluenta non bibere, non in agros vel vineas declinare, regia via nos incedere, hoc est, ad Christum per ipsum properantes, ab omnibus diaboli pompis et operibus abstinere. Sed elatus ille Seon exercitum colligit, et Israel per suos fines habere transitum non permittit.

Quis est autem populus ille quem Seon congregat adversus Israel, nisi reprobi quique, qui persequuntur Ecclesiam? Ex his sunt tyranni, duces ac principes mundi, qui vel catholicis viris per haereticam pravitatem opponunt contradictionis obstacula, vel sanctis martyribus moliuntur inferre tormenta. Sed quid ad haec facit Israel? Interrogemus historiam. «Venit, inquit, in Issaar [Jasa], et pugnavit contra eum. A quo percussus est Seon in ore gladii: et possessa est terra ejus ab Arnon usque Laboch [Jeboc] (Num. XXI).» Ecce superbus, ecce elatus congressus est, sed contritus commisit et perdidit; in arma prosiluit et succubuit. Qui noluit dare viam, perdidit vitam; et dum contempsit annuere publicae viae transitum, amisit proprium regalis gloriae principatum. Israel autem, qui transitum non obtinuit, ad haereditariae possessionis jura pervenit; et cui transire non licuit, de via patriam fecit.

Sed ubi, quaeso, fratres mei, ubi haec est peracta victoria? Felix scilicet locus, qui tantae gloriae meruit videre triumphum! Ubi, inquam, superbum regem obtinuit Israel? In Issaar. Issaar autem interpretatur mandati adimpletio. Et nos si ad hunc locum Deo duce pertingimus, diabolum procul dubio, qui caput est et origo superbiae, superamus. Tunc enim diabolum vincimus, cum Redemptoris nostri mandata complemus. Quanquam, quod est diabolum vincere, hoc ipsum sit divina mandata complere.

Let him, therefore, reject the waters of the proud King Sihon, let him despise the streams of heretical dogmas; and let him draw waters in joy from the fountains of the Savior (Isa. 12). For He who broke open the fountains and torrents (Ps. 73), says here in the Gospel: 'He who drinks the water that I give, rivers of living water shall flow from his belly' (John 7). But let him also walk by the royal road, as he has promised. 'By the royal road,' he says, 'let us walk.' But what is the royal road, except He who says: 'I am the way' (John 14)? Who also in the very moment of His passion shows Himself as king, when He says: 'You say that I am a king' (John 18). We have promised, therefore, to the proud King Sihon not to drink his streams, not to turn aside into fields or vineyards, that we would walk by the royal road, that is, hastening to Christ through Himself, to abstain from all the pomps and works of the devil. But that elated Sihon gathers an army, and does not permit Israel to have passage through his borders.

But who is that people whom Sihon gathers against Israel, except all the reprobates who persecute the Church? From these are the tyrants, leaders, and princes of the world, who either oppose obstacles of contradiction to Catholic men through heretical depravity, or strive to inflict torments upon the holy martyrs. But what does Israel do in response to these things? Let us ask history. 'He came,' it says, 'to Jasa (Issaar), and fought against him. By whom Sihon was struck in the edge of the sword: and his land was possessed from Arnon even to Jabbok (Num. 21).' Behold the proud, behold the elated one has joined battle, but being crushed, he engaged and lost; he leaped forward into arms and succumbed. He who was unwilling to give a way, lost his life; and while he despised to grant passage to the public road, he lost his own sovereignty of royal glory. But Israel, who did not obtain passage, came to the rights of hereditary possession; and for him to whom it was not permitted to pass through, he made a homeland out of the way.

But where, I ask, my brothers, where was this victory achieved? Happy indeed is the place that deserved to see the triumph of such great glory! Where, I say, did Israel overcome the proud king? In Jasa. But Jasa (Issaar) is interpreted as 'fulfillment of the command.' And if we reach this place with God as our leader, we undoubtedly overcome the devil, who is the head and origin of pride. For we then conquer the devil when we fulfill the commands of our Redeemer. Although, that which is to conquer the devil, this itself is to fulfill the divine commands.

Nam, dum carnis illecebras frangimus; dum pravis viscerum passionibus reluctamur, dum divinae jussionis imperio subdimur, et non nostra vota, sed illius jussa servamus, tunc absque dubio mundi principem et totius nequitiae debellamus auctorem. Tunc apostolica illa oratio completur in nobis, qua dicitur: «Deus autem pacis conterat Satanam sub pedibus vestris (Rom.).» Et illud nobis Dominus, quod promisit, impertit: «Ecce dedi vobis potestatem calcandi supra serpentes et scorpiones, et super omnem virtutem inimici, et nihil vobis nocebit (Luc. X).» Sed cum Seon exprimat antiquum hostem, populus autem ejus quosque reprobos, vel Ecclesiae persecutores, qui armis ab Israel, hoc est, a sanctis praedicatoribus sunt prostrati, quo mucrone perfossi, quo denique gladio sunt perempti? Sed audi Apostolum spiritualis utique militiae ducem, et strenuum intestini praelii bellatorem: «Vivus est, inquit, sermo Dei, et efficax, et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti, pertingens usque ad divisionem animae ac spiritus, compagum quoque et medullarum, et discretor cogitationum et intentionum cordis (Hebr. IV).» Hunc divisionis gladium evaginabat dux et auctor ille certaminum, ac dominus bellatorum, cum dicebat: «Nolite putare quia veni mittere pacem in terram. Non enim veni pacem mittere, sed gladium (Matth. X).»

Audisti gladium dividentem, audi consequenter et ipsam divisionem: «Veni, inquit, separare hominem adversus patrem suum, et filiam adversus matrem suam, et nurum adversus socrum suam, et inimici hominis domestici ejus (Ibid.).» Hoc itaque gladio et Seon est peremptus, et omnis ejus exercitus communi caede prostratus. Quia nimirum gladio spiritus, quod est verbum Dei (Ephes. VI), et diabolus corruit, et subjectus sibi populus ab infidelitatis suae vita defecit. Cum itaque Scriptura perhibeat quod illi in ore gladii sunt perempti; de istis non incongrue dici potest quoniam interfecti sunt gladio oris. Et cum Dominus dicat: «Quia princeps mundi ejicietur foras (Joan. XII),» mox ut Seon ejicitur, illico per omnem mundi latitudinem Israel, id est, sancta Ecclesia propagatur. Mox enim ut cum principe suo infidelitas exstincta collabitur, fides triumphantis Ecclesiae dilatatur. Et qui fuerant eatenus exsules, fiunt post victoriam possessores. Unde et eidem Ecclesiae per Isaiam dicitur: «Populus autem tuus, omnes justi, in perpetuum haereditabunt terram (Isa. LXV).» De quo populo et postmodum dicit: «Et habitabunt, et plantabunt vineas, et comedent fructus earum (Ibid.).» Adhuc etiam idem propheta, quod sancta debet Ecclesia per fines gentium dilatari, manifeste denuntiat: «Dilata, inquit, locum tentorii tui, et pelles tabernaculorum tuorum extende; ne parcas; longos fac funiculos tuos et clavos tuos consolida (Isa. LIV).»

For, while we break the allurements of the flesh; while we resist the perverse passions of the bowels, while we are subjected to the empire of the divine bidding, and we keep not our own vows, but His commands, then without doubt we war down the prince of the world and the author of all iniquity. Then that apostolic prayer is fulfilled in us, by which it is said: 'But may the God of peace crush Satan under your feet' (Rom. 16). And the Lord imparts to us that which He promised: 'Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you' (Luke 10). But since Sihon expresses the ancient enemy, and his people all the reprobates or persecutors of the Church, who were prostrated by arms by Israel, that is, by the holy preachers, by what blade were they pierced, by what sword, finally, were they slain? 'The word of God is living,' he says, 'and effective, and more piercing than any two-edged sword, reaching even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints also and marrows, and a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart' (Heb. 4). This sword of division that leader and author of contests, and lord of warriors, unsheathed when he said: 'Do not think that I came to send peace upon the earth. For I came not to send peace, but a sword' (Matt. 10).

You have heard of the dividing sword, hear consequently also of the division itself: 'I came,' he says, 'to separate a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies shall be those of his own household' (Matt. 10). By this sword, therefore, both Sihon was slain, and all his army prostrated in a common slaughter. Because, of course, by the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6), both the devil fell, and the people subject to him failed from the life of their infidelity. Since, therefore, Scripture asserts that they were slain in the edge of the sword; it can be said of these not incongruously that they were killed by the sword of the mouth. And when the Lord says: 'Because the prince of the world shall be cast out' (John 12), as soon as Sihon is cast out, immediately through the whole breadth of the world Israel, that is, the holy Church, is propagated. For as soon as infidelity falls extinguished with its prince, the faith of the triumphant Church is dilated. And those who had been hitherto exiles, after the victory become possessors. Whence also it is said to the same Church through Isaiah: 'But your people, all the just, shall inherit the land forever' (Isa. 65). Of which people he also says afterwards: 'And they shall inhabit, and they shall plant vineyards, and they shall eat the fruits of them' (Ibid.). Still also the same prophet clearly announces that the holy Church must be dilated through the ends of the nations: 'Enlarge,' he says, 'the place of your tent, and stretch out the skins of your tabernacles; do not spare; make your cords long and consolidate your stakes' (Isa. 54).

Cur autem haec agere debeat, aperit, cum subjungit: «Ad dexteram enim et ad laevam penetrabis, et semen tuum gentes haereditabit (Ibid.).» Omnis ergo terra Seon cecidit in haereditatem Israel; quia, dum princeps mundi hujus gladio divini verbi confossus egreditur, sancta universalis Ecclesia per ejusdem mundi terminos dilatatur.

Nec praetereundum arbitror esse quod dicitur: Quia possessa est terra ejus ab Arnon usque Laboch [Jeboc]. Arnon itaque, quae est initium regni Seon, interpretatur maledictiones eorum. Omnis enim mundus, qui ante Salvatoris adventum sub diaboli premebatur imperio, maledictionis habebat originem, quia benedictionis ignorabat auctorem; de quo nimirum per Prophetam dicitur: «Benedictionem dabit, qui legem dedit (Psal. LXXXIII).» Unde et Apostolus ait: «Quicunque enim ex operibus legis sunt, sub maledicto sunt.» An non maledictionis habebamus initium, de quibus dicitur: «Eramus, inquit, natura filii irae, sicut et caeteri. (Ephes. I.)» Finis autem regni illius est Laboch, quod interpretatur luctamen. Necesse est enim omnes qui volunt exire de regno diaboli et ejus fines evadere, tentationum ingruentium certamina tolerare. Quod si quisquam legitime certaverit, et viriliter obluctatus evicerit, jam non erit Laboch civitas Seon, sed civitas Israel; non scilicet qui in carne sit Israel; nec in manifesto Judaeus; sed qui in Christo sit Israel, circumcisus corde, non carne.

Haec vobis, fratres charissimi, quasi per excessum diximus, ut spirituale certamen in quo B. Christophorus insignis triumphator enituit, etiam per sacrae historiae mysterium doceamus. Nec debet mirum videri si sacrae pugnae describimus ordinem, qui strenuum laudare cupimus pugnatorem. Ipse nimirum, tanquam verus et fortis Israelita, Aegyptum ac ferreae servitutis jura contempsit; et per bella, per ignes, per ferrum, sagittas et gladios, terram repromissionis intravit. Qui nimirum tanquam rosa purpurea de Chananaeorum spinis effloruit, et quasi de silvestribus oleastris pinguis oliva processit, Christianae militiae tirocinium petiit, ac novae fidei rudimenta suscipiens, in medios certaminum aestus fervidus se bellator immersit. Modo quippe molitur per lenocinantia meretricum blandimenta Dei militem flectere, modo minarum intonantium asperitate terrere, modo parat sagittis insuere, modo ferventis olei fluoribus eliquare. Sed invictissimus Christi miles et imperterritus praeliator, nec per blandimenta seduci, nec per exquisita poenarum supplicia frangi, nec per furentem carnificum rabiem a sancto valet proposito revocari.

But why she ought to do these things, he opens, when he adds: 'For you shall penetrate to the right and to the left, and your seed shall inherit the nations' (Ibid.). All the land of Sihon, therefore, fell into the inheritance of Israel; because, while the prince of this world goes out pierced by the sword of the divine word, the holy universal Church is dilated through the borders of the same world.

Nor do I think it should be passed over what is said: That his land was possessed from Arnon even to Jabbok (Laboch). Arnon, indeed, which is the beginning of the kingdom of Sihon, is interpreted as 'their curses.' For the whole world, which before the advent of the Savior was pressed under the empire of the devil, had the origin of a curse, because it was ignorant of the author of blessing; of whom indeed it is said through the Prophet: 'He who gave the law shall give a blessing' (Ps. 83). Whence also the Apostle says: 'For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse.' Or did we not have the beginning of a curse, of whom it is said: 'We were,' he says, 'by nature children of wrath, even as the rest' (Eph. 2)? But the end of that kingdom is Jabbok, which is interpreted as 'struggle.' For it is necessary for all who wish to go out from the kingdom of the devil and escape his borders, to tolerate the contests of rushing temptations. Which if anyone shall have fought lawfully, and being manfully struggled against shall have overcome, now Jabbok will not be the city of Sihon, but the city of Israel; not indeed he who is Israel in the flesh; nor in manifest a Jew; but he who is Israel in Christ, circumcised in heart, not in flesh.

These things we have said to you, dearest brothers, as if by way of digression, so that we might teach the spiritual contest in which the Blessed Christopher shone forth as a distinguished triumpher, even through the mystery of sacred history. Nor ought it to seem strange if we describe the order of the sacred fight, we who desire to praise a strenuous fighter. He indeed, as a true and strong Israelite, despised Egypt and the laws of iron servitude; and through wars, through fires, through iron, arrows and swords, he entered the land of promise. Who indeed, like a purple rose, blossomed from the thorns of the Canaanites, and as a fat olive proceeded from wild olives, sought the novitiate of the Christian militia, and receiving the rudiments of the new faith, as a fervent warrior immersed himself in the midst of the heats of the contests. At one time indeed he strives to bend the soldier of God through the enticing allurements of harlots, at another to terrify him by the harshness of thundering threats, now he prepares to pierce him with arrows, now to melt him with the flows of boiling oil. But the most invincible soldier of Christ and undaunted warrior could neither be seduced by allurements, nor broken by exquisite punishments of torments, nor be recalled from his holy purpose by the raging madness of the executioners.

Diversa tormentorum genera circa Christi militem tyrannus exaggerat, sed invictae fidei fundamentum immobile perseverat. Flumina tumefacta circumstrepunt, spumosi procellarum cumuli praecipites irruunt, undique venti furentes impingunt, sed excelsa domus fabrica, quae de firmae petrae soliditate consurgit, ad violentiae cujuslibet impetum nutare non novit. Stetit columna Dei inter persecutorum undique saevientium turbines immobilis, perstitit inter grandinum immaniter ingruentium tempestates. Miles enim Christi inter hostiles acies deprehensus, non modo flecti caedendo non potuit, sed et sanctae praedicationis jacula valenter intorsit; et, sicut bellator instructus, in proprios usus aliena tela convertit. Persecutor enim saeviendo servivit, et, dum nocere voluit, nesciens ministravit; quia quo magis eum reperit sui furoris insaniam aequanimiter patientem, eo velut auri decocti speciem reddidit clariorem.

Quem tyrannus ut praecinctum Dei militem conspexit, infremuit, eumque diversis telorum modis, multis bellorum machinis oppugnare tentavit.

Hujus itaque, fratres mei, tam egregii praeliatoris imitemur exemplum, istius formam, istius teneamus in nostra tentatione custodiam. Adversus hunc tyrannus omnia fere elementa commovit, et superare non potuit. Nos saltem carnis nostrae resistamus illecebris, reprimamus iram, studeamus edomare superbiam, omniumque vitiorum monstra fidei virtute calcemus; et qui gloriosum hunc virum novimus tormentis non cessisse carnificum, nos saltem non acquiescamus titillantium illecebris voluptatum, licet nec dum valeamus ad exemplum beati hujus martyris Deum perfecte diligere, studeamus eum interim amando timere, timendo mandatis ejus insistere, sicque paulatim ad amoris ejus valebimus culmen ascendere. Nam si diligenter intendimus, hunc dispositionis ordinem et in ipsius Domini sermonibus invenimus. Nam in Deuteronomio legitur: «Et nunc Israel, quid Dominus Deus tuus quaerit abs te, nisi ut timeas Dominum Deum tuum, et ambules in viis ejus, et diligas eum? (Deut. X.)» Ut videlicet Creatorem suum mens humana timere prius incipiat, deinde se in mandatis ejus exerceat, sic postremo ad concipiendam divini amoris dulcedinem convalescat. Hunc scilicet intimae dilectionis ordinem sponsa quaerit in Canticis: «Ordinate, inquit, in me charitatem (Cant. II).» Ad charitatem ergo, dilectissimi, mentis nostrae se fervor accendat, per quam et hostilis versutiae machinas respuat, et lubrica mundi hujus oblectamenta contemnat. Demus repudium mundo, praebeamus in nostris visceribus habitaculum Deo; ut si, juxta nomen B. martyris, Christum nunc in nostro pectore ferimus, ad eum postmodum angelico subvehente remigio, deferamur. Ipse est enim qui et sanctis praebet martyribus gloriam, et conversis peccatoribus donat offensam.

The tyrant exaggerates various kinds of torments around the soldier of Christ, but the immobile foundation of invincible faith perseveres. The swollen rivers roar around, the foamy heaps of storms rush headlong, the raging winds strike from every side, but the high fabric of the house, which rises from the solidity of the firm rock, knows not how to totter at the onset of any violence. The column of God stood immobile among the whirlwinds of the persecutors raging on every side, it persisted among the tempests of hails rushing monstrously. For the soldier of Christ, caught among the hostile battle lines, not only could not be bent by striking, but also strongly hurled the darts of holy preaching; and, like an instructed warrior, he turned the foreign weapons to his own uses. For the persecutor served by raging, and, while he wished to harm, he ministered unknowingly; because the more he found him patiently enduring the insanity of his fury, the more he rendered the appearance of refined gold clearer.

When the tyrant beheld him as a girded soldier of God, he growled, and attempted to attack him with various modes of weapons, with many machines of war.

Therefore, my brothers, let us imitate the example of so distinguished a warrior, let us hold his form, let us keep his guardianship in our temptation. Against him the tyrant moved almost all the elements, and could not overcome him. Let us at least resist the allurements of our flesh, let us repress anger, let us study to tame pride, and let us trample the monsters of all vices by the virtue of faith; and we who know that this glorious man did not yield to the torments of the executioners, let us at least not acquiesce to the titillating allurements of pleasures, although we are not yet able to love God perfectly according to the example of this blessed martyr, let us study meanwhile to fear Him by loving, by fearing to insist on His commands, and so gradually we shall be able to ascend to the summit of His love. For if we diligently attend, we find this order of disposition even in the words of the Lord Himself. For in Deuteronomy it is read: 'And now Israel, what does the Lord your God seek from you, except that you fear the Lord your God, and walk in His ways, and love Him? (Deut. 10).' Namely, so that the human mind may first begin to fear its Creator, then exercise itself in His commands, and so finally grow strong to conceive the sweetness of divine love. The bride in the Canticles seeks this order indeed of inward affection: 'Order,' she says, 'charity in me (Cant. 2).' Therefore, most beloved, let the fervor of our mind be kindled toward charity, through which it may both reject the machines of hostile craftiness, and despise the slippery delights of this world. Let us give a repudiation to the world, let us provide a dwelling place for God in our bowels; so that if, according to the name of the Blessed martyr, we now bear Christ in our breast, we may afterwards be carried to Him by the rowing of angels. For it is He who both provides glory to the holy martyrs, and grants forgiveness for offenses to converted sinners.

Ipse est qui et in certantium victoria superat, et de poenitentium conversione triumphat, Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et gloriatur in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XXXIV.

I. DE SS. FLORA ET LUCILLA VIRGINE ET MARTYRE (XXIX JUL.).

Gaudemus, fratres charissimi, virginum celebrare triumphum, qui virginalem partum non ambigimus nostrae redemptionis exordium. Auctor quippe virginitatis, qui per virginem dignatus est in hujus mundi campum praeliaturus accedere, per plures quoque virgines victoriae suae voluit insignia reparare. Ex quibus nimirum et istae virgines tanquam geminae lampades effulserunt, quae, juxta nominis utriusque praesagium, una quidem florem redolet, micat altera lucem. Istae itaque, sicut in veterum gestorum reperitur historia, a barbaro quodam rege captae, per geminata decennii curricula sub honesta custodia sunt detentae. Rex autem primum quidem libidinis igne succensus efferbuit, sed earum constantia vehementer infractus, tandem castitatis consilio salubriter acquievit. Postremo etiam, qui captivas duxerat, concaptivus factus regalia sceptra deposuit, et cum eis simul per martyrii palmam terrenum regnum coelestis imperii gloria permutavit. Deposuit volaticam purpuram, et immortalitatis adeptus est stolam. Pro ruinalis aulae tricliniis meruit domum non manufactam, aeternam in coelis. Et quam pulchra rerum species, ut qui prius fuerat tanquam Leo frendens inter lustra ferarum, jam intra caulas Ecclesiae, factus mitis agniculus, ubera sugeret ovium.

His ergo duabus sanctis virginibus manifecte concessum esse perpendimus quod sponsae sponsus in Canticis mystice pollicetur: «Coronaberis, inquit, de vertice Sanir, de capite Amana et Hermon, de cubilibus leonum, de montibus pardorum (Cant. IV).» Amana siquidem mons esse Ciliciae dicitur, qui et Taurus a compluribus appellatur. Sanir vero et Hermon Judaicae terrae montes sunt, in quibus leones et pardi habitare creduntur. Per hos ergo montes reges et principes diversaeque hujus mundi intelligendae sunt potestates, quae velut montes se in superbiae cacumen attollunt, et malignis spiritibus tanquam pardis atque leonibus habitaculum ferunt. Perversi quippe spiritus leones vocantur propter crudelitatem; pardi autem, quia hoc animal varii coloris est, propter deceptionis ac fraudis multimodam varietatem.

It is He who both overcomes in the victory of those who struggle, and triumphs over the conversion of the penitent, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and is glorified forever and ever. Amen.

Sermon XXXIV.

I. ON SAINTS FLORA AND LUCILLA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR (JULY 29).

We rejoice, dearest brothers, to celebrate the triumph of virgins, we who do not doubt that the virginal birth is the beginning of our redemption. Indeed, the Author of virginity, who deigned to enter the field of this world through a virgin to fight, wished also to repair the insignia of His victory through many virgins. From among whom indeed these virgins shone forth like twin lamps, who, according to the presage of each name, one indeed smells of a flower, the other gleams with light. These, therefore, as is found in the history of ancient deeds, being captured by a certain barbarian king, were detained under honest custody through doubled cycles of a decade. But the king at first indeed seethed, being kindled with the fire of lust, but being vehemently broken by their constancy, at length he healthfully acquiesced to the counsel of chastity. Finally also, he who had led them captive, being made a fellow captive, laid down the royal scepters, and with them together through the palm of martyrdom exchanged the earthly kingdom for the glory of the heavenly empire. He laid down the fleeting purple, and attained the robe of immortality. For the dining rooms of a ruinous palace he merited a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And how beautiful a sight of things, that he who had before been like a gnashing Lion among the dens of beasts, now within the folds of the Church, being made a gentle little lamb, should suck the udders of the sheep.

Therefore, we consider that it was clearly granted to these two holy virgins what the bridegroom mystically promises to the bride in the Canticles: 'You shall be crowned,' he says, 'from the top of Sanir, from the head of Amana and Hermon, from the dens of lions, from the mountains of leopards (Cant. 4).' Indeed, Amana is said to be a mountain of Cilicia, which is also called Taurus by many. But Sanir and Hermon are mountains of the land of Judea, in which lions and leopards are believed to dwell. By these mountains, therefore, are to be understood the kings and princes and various powers of this world, which lift themselves up like mountains into the peak of pride, and provide a dwelling place for malignant spirits as if for leopards and lions. For perverse spirits are called lions because of their cruelty; and leopards, because this animal is of varied color, because of the manifold variety of deception and fraud.

De his ergo montibus vel quaeque fidelis anima vel sancta coronatur Ecclesia, quando saeculi principes convertit ad fidem, vel ad sanctae conversationis dirigit rectitudinem. Coronatur autem, quia vel pro apportato eorum lucro remuneratur a Christo, vel ab eisdem quibus antea premebatur, honoratur in saeculo. Coronatur, inquam, de cubilibus leonum et montibus pardorum, quando superbos quosque atque dolosos a sua pravitate convertit, et pro correctis eorum moribus aeterna praemia recipit. Quod profecto his sacris virginibus contigisse probatur, si tamen rei fides est adhibenda quae dicitur, quae et de iniquo prius rege victoriae palmam, et de converso postmodum ac feliciter consummato consecutae sunt gloriam. Dicant ergo coelesti Sponso beatae virgines quod in eisdem canticis dicitur: «Exsultabimus, et laetabimur in te (cant. I).» Non in nobis, sed in te; quia qui nos dudum ad lucem veritatis tuae de tenebris eduxisti, per nos etiam de ignorantiae caligine ad notitiam tui nominis et alios provocasti, ut fiat quod dicitur: «Qui gloriatur, in Domino glorietur (I Cor. I).» Jam vero, quod stylus tradit historiae, Dominum scilicet eis nocturno silentio fuisse locutum, easque ad consummandum Romae provocasse martyrium. Nonne videtur ad hoc manifeste congruere quod inter eosdem sponsum et sponsam per typici colloquii conseritur sacramentum? «Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat. Vox dilecti mei pulsantis: Aperi, soror mea, amica mea, columba mea, immaculata mea; quia caput meum plenum est rore, et cincinni mei guttis noctium (cant. V).» Dicit ergo utraque beata virgo, quarum scilicet erat cor unum et anima una: «Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat;» quia videlicet sancta mens quo se a strepitu temporalis concupiscentiae comprimit, eo verius interna cognoscit; et tanto ad intima vigilat, quanto se ab exteriori inquietudine solerter occultat.

Dormiebant itaque sanctae istae virgines a negotiis et concupiscentia saeculi, sed apertos atque pervigiles tenebant oculos in aestu amoris Dei. Sed quia non est hoc tempus plenae quietis, sed laboris potius atque certaminis, repente dilectus ostium pulsat, easque ad procinctum conserendi belli suis exhortationibus excitat: «Vox, inquit, dilecti mei pulsantis (Ibid).» Pulsat dilectus, cum fideles suos provocat Christus aut ad suarum incrementa virtutum, aut certe ad lucrandas animas proximorum. Aperi mihi, soror mea. Soror utique, quia regni mei mihi cohaeres effecta, et in necessitudinem mihi fraternae adoptionis adscita. Amica mea, quia de jugo servitutis erepta, cognovisti meae veritatis arcana. Columba mea, quia fellis amaritudine vacua, et spiritus mei qui in columba descendit, dono ditata. Immaculata mea, quia effusione mei sanguinis ab omni peccatorum tuorum labe purgata es.

From these mountains, therefore, either every faithful soul or the holy Church is crowned, when she converts the princes of the age to the faith, or directs them toward the rectitude of holy conversation. But she is crowned, because she is either remunerated by Christ for the profit brought from them, or she is honored in the world by those very ones by whom she was previously pressed. She is crowned, I say, from the dens of lions and the mountains of leopards, when she converts all the proud and deceitful from their depravity, and receives eternal rewards for their corrected morals. Which indeed is proved to have happened to these holy virgins, if indeed faith is to be applied to the matter which is told, who obtained both the palm of victory over the previously iniquitous king, and afterwards the glory of him converted and happily consummated. Let the blessed virgins say therefore to the heavenly Bridegroom what is said in the same canticles: 'We will exult, and we will rejoice in you (Cant. 1).' Not in ourselves, but in you; because you who have recently led us out of darkness to the light of your truth, have also provoked others through us from the fog of ignorance to the knowledge of your name, so that there may be done what is said: 'He who glories, let him glory in the Lord (1 Cor. 1).' But already, what the style of history hands down, namely that the Lord had spoken to them in the silence of the night, and had provoked them to consummate their martyrdom in Rome. Does it not seem to agree clearly to this what is joined between the same bridegroom and bride through the sacrament of typical colloquy? 'I sleep, and my heart watches. The voice of my beloved knocking: Open to me, my sister, my friend, my dove, my immaculate one; because my head is full of dew, and my locks with the drops of the nights (Cant. 5).' Each blessed virgin says therefore, of whom indeed there was one heart and one soul: 'I sleep, and my heart watches;' namely because the more the holy mind compresses itself from the noise of temporal concupiscence, the more truly it knows internal things; and it watches so much to the inward things, as much as it skillfully hides itself from external disquietude.

These holy virgins therefore were sleeping from the businesses and concupiscence of the age, but they were holding eyes open and very watchful in the heat of the love of God. But because this is not the time of full rest, but rather of labor and of contest, suddenly the beloved knocks at the door, and excites them to the girding for joining battle by his exhortations: 'The voice,' he says, 'of my beloved knocking (Cant. 5).' The beloved knocks when Christ provokes his faithful either to the increments of their virtues, or certainly to winning the souls of their neighbors. 'Open to me, my sister.' My sister indeed, because you have been made a co-heir with me of my kingdom, and assumed into the kinship of fraternal adoption. 'My friend,' because snatched from the yoke of servitude, you have known the secrets of my truth. 'My dove,' because void of the bitterness of gall, and enriched with the gift of my spirit who descended in a dove. 'My immaculate one,' because by the effusion of my blood you have been purged from every stain of your sins.

Aperi itaque mihi, hoc est, de quiete et otio dilectae tibi contemplationis egredere, et ad perhibendum veritati meae testimonium ferventissime te et constanter impende: «Quia caput meum plenum est rore, et cincinni mei guttis noctium (I Cor. XI).»

Caput C

hristi Deus est, ut dicit Apostolus.

Cincinni vero intimae sanctorum cogitationes sunt, quae non laxae fluunt et dissolutae, sed timoris et amoris Dei sunt vinculo colligatae. Enimvero, quid per rorem et guttas noctium, nisi tenebrosas et frigidas quorumdam reproborum mentes accipimus?

Caput ergo sponsi in reprobis plenum est rore, cum saeculares quippe a Dei charitate torpescunt, et per voluptatum suarum lasciviam defluunt. Juxta id quod Dominus dicit: «Abundabit iniquitas, et refrigescet charitas multorum (Matth. XXIV).» Hujusmodi plane cum sanctos Dei persequuntur et odiunt, in illorum cordibus quasi cincinni sponsi guttis noctium pleni sunt. Cumque tales multiplicantur et Ecclesiam persecutionibus aggravant, tunc sponsus sponsam exhortatur ut surgat et studio praedicationis valenter insistat. Hinc est quod Flora et Lucilla beatissimae virgines per noctem divinitus admonentur ut Romam redeant, atque ad martyrii certamen accedere nullatenus pertimescant. Ubi enim vidit omnipotens Deus persecutionis aestum ferventius ebullire, illic decrevit per fragilem sexum gloriosius triumphare.

Sed ut ad Canticum redeam, utraque haec venerabilis virgo tanquam singulari unimodi oris depromit eloquio: «Exspoliavi me, inquit, tunica mea, quomodo induar illam?» (Cant. V.) Ac si dicat: Exui me curis et occupationibus saeculi, et in solo me tuae contemplationis amore constrinxi. Quomodo itaque nunc discursionis iter arripiam? Quomodo strepitus et luctamen obloquentium feram? Quod autem per tunicas curas sollicitudinesque significet, ostendit Dominus, cum dicit: «Qui in tecto est, non descendat tollere tunicam suam (Matth. XXIV).» Quod est aperte dicere, qui sublimi contemplationis arce subnititur, nequaquam descendat, ut iterum saecularis negotii occupationibus implicetur. «Lavi pedes meos, quomodo inquinabo illos? (Cant. V).» id est gressus mei operis ab aspersione terreni pulveris dignis poenitentiae fletibus ablui, quo pacto jam potero, nisi, quibus assueta sum, coelestia meditari?

Open therefore to me, that is, go out from the rest and leisure of the contemplation beloved to you, and spend yourself most fervently and constantly for bearing testimony to my truth: 'Because my head is full of dew, and my locks with the drops of the nights (Cant. 5).'

The head of Christ is God, as the Apostle says (1 Cor. 11).

But the locks are the intimate thoughts of the saints, which do not flow loose and dissolved, but are bound together by the bond of the fear and love of God. Truly, what do we receive through the dew and the drops of the nights, except the dark and cold minds of certain reprobates?

Therefore, the head of the bridegroom among the reprobate is full of dew, since worldly people indeed grow numb from the love of God, and flow away through the lasciviousness of their pleasures. According to what the Lord says: 'Iniquity will abound, and the charity of many will grow cold (Matt. 24).' Plainly, when such people persecute and hate the saints of God, in their hearts the locks of the bridegroom are, as it were, full of the drops of the nights. And when such people multiply and burden the Church with persecutions, then the bridegroom exhorts the bride to rise and strongly persist in the zeal of preaching. Hence it is that the most blessed virgins Flora and Lucilla are divinely admonished during the night to return to Rome, and by no means to fear approaching the contest of martyrdom. For where almighty God saw the heat of persecution boil more fervently, there he decreed to triumph more gloriously through the fragile sex.

But to return to the Song [of Songs], each of these venerable virgins brings forth as if with the unique eloquence of a single mouth: 'I have put off, she says, my coat; how shall I put it on?' (Cant. 5.) As if she were saying: I have stripped myself of the cares and occupations of the world, and have constrained myself in the love of your contemplation alone. How, then, shall I now take up the journey of wandering? How shall I bear the noise and struggle of those who speak against me? Moreover, the Lord shows that he signifies cares and anxieties by coats, when he says: 'He who is on the housetop, let him not come down to take his coat (Matt. 24).' Which is to say openly, he who relies on the sublime citadel of contemplation, let him by no means descend so as to be again entangled in the occupations of worldly business. 'I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? (Cant. 5),' that is, I have washed the steps of my work from the sprinkling of earthly dust with worthy tears of repentance; by what means can I now do anything except meditate on heavenly things, to which I am accustomed?

Veruntamen beatae virgines istae, Flora videlicet et Lucilla, postponunt contemplationis requiem, cum qua in aula regni tanquam in eremo eatenus vixerant; et, ad Salvatoris imperium procedentes, quietis amissae damnum subeundi martyrii gloria recompensant. Qui enim eis verba forinsecus dabat, ipse etiam mentes earum ad fervorem obedientiae intrinsecus accendebat. Unde utraeque beatissimae virgines veluti uniloqua perhibent voce, dicentes: «Dilectus meus misit manum suam per foramen, et venter meus intremuit ad tactum ejus (Ibid).» Dilectus plane manum per foramen mittit, et ventrem tangit, cum occulta Conditor inspiratione cor visitat atque ad agonem certaminis et sancti laboris inflammat. Nam, quod venter cor significet, ostendit propheta cum dicit: «Ventrem meum doleo.» Quod profecto quid esset, aperit, cum subjungit: «Sensus cordis mei dissipati sunt (Jer. IV).» Beatarum ergo virginum, Florae videlicet et Lucillae, venter intremuit, cum dilectus manum misit et tetigit. Quia mox et earum cor divinae jussionis mandata concepit, se sibimet abnegans, nihil suo deinceps arbitrio reservavit. Unde utraque adhuc quasi singulariter dicit: «Surrexi, ut aperirem dilecto meo (Cant. V).» Surrexerunt sanctae virgines, ut dilecto mox aperirent; quia promptissimo decreverunt animo ut humiliter obedirent. Aperuerunt nempe dilecto, cum, cervicem cordis ad ejus imperium inclinantes, calcaverunt propriam, totisque viribus voluntatem implevere divinam.

Sed nos forte quis arguat cur, relictis Scripturarum patentibus campis, de solo canticorum angulo florum odoramenta decerpimus, ut sacris virginibus sertum gloriae compingamus. Quod utique, fratres mei, fateor, ex industria facimus, quia nulli melius arbitramur canticum nuptiale congruere, quam sacris istis virginibus, quae coelestis sponsi thalamos per insignem martyrii victoryiam conscenderunt; in illius nunc sponsi complexibus requiescunt, pro cujus amore, sub duro laborum ac pressurarum pondere desudarunt; in cujus nimirum nuptiali foedere non locum corruptio reperit, sed virginalis integritas crevit.

Sequamur itaque, dilectissimi, sacratissimas virgines in via laborum atque certaminum; ut eis extremi saltem, et ultimi jungi mereamur in retributionibus meritorum. Pudeat viros carnalibus illecebris deservire, qui fragilem sexum videmus per diversa tormenta, per ferrum, per gladios regna coelestia penetrare. Erubescat vir sub degeneris otii umbra torpescere, qui puellas videat sub persecutionis aestu in agonis stadio viriliter decertare. Sic itaque nunc sacrarum virginum, in quantum possumus, imitemur exemplum, ut cum eis quandoque perducamur ad virginitatis auctorem Virginis Filium; qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Nevertheless, these blessed virgins, namely Flora and Lucilla, set aside the rest of contemplation, with which they had lived until then in the court of the kingdom as if in a desert; and, proceeding at the command of the Savior, they compensate the loss of lost rest with the glory of undergoing martyrdom. For he who gave them words from without, also himself enkindled their minds from within to the fervor of obedience. Whence both most blessed virgins testify as if with a single voice, saying: 'My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my belly trembled at his touch (Ibid).' The beloved plainly puts his hand through the hole and touches the belly, when the Creator visits the heart with hidden inspiration and inflames it to the agony of the contest and holy labor. For, that the belly signifies the heart, the prophet shows when he says: 'My belly is in pain.' He opens what that indeed was when he adds: 'The senses of my heart are dissipated (Jer. 4).' Therefore, the belly of the blessed virgins, namely Flora and Lucilla, trembled when the beloved sent his hand and touched it. Because soon their heart also conceived the mandates of the divine command, denying itself to itself, it reserved nothing thereafter for its own judgment. Whence each still says as if singularly: 'I rose up to open to my beloved (Cant. 5).' The holy virgins rose up to open soon to the beloved; because they decreed with a most prompt mind to obey humbly. They indeed opened to the beloved when, inclining the neck of the heart to his command, they trampled upon their own [will], and fulfilled the divine will with all their strength.

But perhaps someone may argue against us why, having left the open fields of the Scriptures, we pluck the fragrances of flowers from only the corner of the Song of Songs, so that we may fashion a garland of glory for the holy virgins. Which indeed, my brothers, I confess, we do on purpose, because we think that a nuptial song fits no one better than these holy virgins, who have ascended to the bridal chambers of the heavenly bridegroom through the distinguished victory of martyrdom; they now rest in the embraces of that bridegroom, for whose love they toiled under the hard weight of labors and pressures; in whose nuptial covenant indeed corruption found no place, but virginal integrity grew.

Let us follow therefore, most beloved, the most holy virgins in the way of labors and contests; so that we may deserve to be joined to them at least as the last and the latest in the retributions of merits. Let men be ashamed to serve carnal allurements, we who see the fragile sex penetrate the heavenly kingdoms through various torments, through iron, through swords. Let a man blush to grow numb under the shadow of degenerate leisure, who sees young girls fight manfully in the heat of persecution in the arena of the contest (*agonis stadio*). Thus therefore let us now imitate the example of the holy virgins, as much as we can, so that with them we may one day be brought to the author of virginity, the Son of the Virgin; who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

Sermo XXXV.

II. DE SS. FLORA, LUCILLA VIRGINIBUS ET MARTYRIBUS. (XXXI JUL.).

Adhuc, dilectissimi, virgineus germinat partus, adhuc virginalis illa fecunditas coelestium segetum fructus accumulat, cum muliebris infirmitas non modo sexum superat, sed et mundi hujus principem insuperabili mentis magnanimitate triumphat. Ad hoc namque Dei Filius vernantis vulvae flore conceptus est, ut fermentum vetus in azymam verteret, et per carnem, quae victa fuerat, humano generi victoriam reportaret. Loricam quippe sibi de nostra fragilitate composuit, in qua exsultans ut gigas (Psal. XVIII), et potens ac fortis in praelio, potestates aereas debellavit.

Sic itaque de infirmitate constantia, de captivitate victoria, de ruina est ascensio procurata. Hinc siquidem factum est ut antiquus hostis, qui sibi provenisse victoriam per unius feminae vecordiam applaudebat, per multas se jam devictum atque confusum feminas erubescat. Hinc est et quod nunc versatur in manibus, quia videlicet sacratissimae istae virgines, Flora scilicet et Lucilla, et prius illecebras voluptatum, et postmodum gladios contempsere tortorum. Quaeque diutissime prius fuerant martyres in occulto, claruerunt postmodum victrices in publico. Quibus nimirum illud aptissime congruit quod sponsa dicit in Canticis: «Fasciculus myrrhae dilectus meus mihi, inter ubera mea commorabitur (Cant. I).» Myrrha plane species est aromatica nimiae amaritudinis, qua mortuorum cadavera condiuntur, ne facile computrescant. Hinc est quod et ipsius sponsi corpus a Nicodemo et Joseph, de cruce depositum, myrrha et aloe conditur, et linteis involutum sepulturae committitur (Joan. XIX).

Quid ergo per myrrhae fasciculum, nisi multiplex mortificatio designatur? Non enim dicit, surculus myrrhae, vel ramusculus myrrhae, sed fasciculus, inquit, myrrhae dilectus meus mihi. Ac si dicat quia in omni me mea conversatione mortifico, et nullis jam propriae voluntatis operibus vivo, dilectus meus non mihi simplex factus est ramus, sed myrrhae fasciculus. Unde et praedicator eximius: «Ego, inquit, stigmata Jesu in corpore meo porto (Gal. VI).» Ad quam videlicet multiplicem mortificationem, et nos secum hortatur, dicens: «Semper mortificationem Jesu in corpore nostro circumferentes, ut et vita Jesu manifestetur in carne nostra mortali (II Cor. IV).» Ab eo namque quod corpore nostro circumferimus, nullam corporis partem vacuam reservamus. Ille ergo mortificationem Jesu in corpore suo circumfert, qui de se sibi nihil relinquit, qui non sibi sed Christo in omnibus vivit; qui certe se a voluntatibus propriis undique crucifigit.

Sermon XXXV.

II. ON SAINTS FLORA AND LUCILLA, VIRGINS AND MARTYRS. (JULY 31).

Still, most beloved, the virginal offspring germinates; still that virginal fecundity accumulates the fruits of the heavenly harvests, when feminine weakness not only overcomes the sex, but also triumphs over the prince of this world with insuperable magnanimity of mind. For this purpose indeed the Son of God was conceived from the flower of the vernal womb, so that he might turn the old leaven into unleavened bread (*azymam*), and through the flesh, which had been conquered, might bring back victory to the human race. He indeed composed for himself a breastplate from our fragility, in which exulting as a giant (Ps. 18), and powerful and strong in battle, he vanquished the aerial powers.

Thus therefore from infirmity constancy, from captivity victory, from ruin ascension was procured. Hence indeed it came to pass that the ancient enemy, who was applauding himself that victory had come to him through the folly of one woman, now blushes that he is conquered and confounded through many women. Hence it is also what is now at hand, because namely these most holy virgins, Flora and Lucilla, first contemned the allurements of pleasures, and afterwards the swords of the torturers. And those who for a very long time before had been martyrs in secret, afterwards shone as victors in public. To whom indeed that fits most aptly which the bride says in the Song of Songs: 'A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, he shall abide between my breasts (Cant. 1).' Myrrh is plainly an aromatic species of excessive bitterness, with which the corpses of the dead are seasoned, lest they easily putrefy. Hence it is that the body of the bridegroom himself also, taken down from the cross by Nicodemus and Joseph, is seasoned with myrrh and aloes, and committed to burial wrapped in linen cloths (John 19).

What therefore is designated by the bundle of myrrh, except multiple mortification? For she does not say, a sprig of myrrh, or a little branch of myrrh, but she says, a bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me. As if she were saying that because in all my conduct I mortify myself, and I live now by no works of my own will, my beloved has become for me not a simple branch, but a bundle of myrrh. Whence also the distinguished preacher says: 'I bear the marks (*stigmata*) of Jesus in my body (Gal. 6).' To which multiple mortification indeed he also exhorts us with himself, saying: 'Always bearing about the mortification of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh (2 Cor. 4).' For from that which we bear about in our body, we reserve no part of the body empty. He therefore bears about the mortification of Jesus in his body, who leaves nothing of himself to himself, who lives not for himself but for Christ in all things; who certainly crucifies himself from his own wills on all sides.

Hic itaque dilectus myrrhae fasciculus fit, quia in cunctis suis actionibus se velut exstinctum praebens, multiplicem quodammodo mortificationis Christi manipulum colligit. Concinant ergo beatissimae virgines, quae, unum sponsum habentes, zelotypiam non noverunt, et sicut per charitatis glutinum unam ex duabus animam conflant, ita velut uno ore singulariter dicant: «Fasciculus myrrhae dilectus meus mihi.» Ubi et apte subjungitur: «Inter ubera mea commorabitur.» Nemo dubitat inter ubera pectoris esse locum cordis.

Dilectus ergo inter utriusque virginis ubera commoratur, quia indeficiens ejus amor ac desiderium ex earum memoria non deletur. «Inter ubera mea commorabitur,» tanquam diceret: Qui mihi fasciculus myrrhae factus est per amaritudinem passionis, inter ubera mea jugiter commoratur per dulcedinem cordis, et qui me extrinsecus per exemplum susceptae mortis exasperat, per infusam gratiam me intimae suavitatis obdulcat; sicut de eodem sponsa iterum dicit: «Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus, electus ex millibus (Cant. V).» Candidus videlicet ex gloria divinitatis, rubicundus autem per sanguinem passionis. Electus vero ex millibus dicitur, quia ex omni sanctorum multitudine solus est qui dignus fuit audire: «Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui (Matth. III, XVII).»

Hanc dilecti pulchritudinem venerabiles istae virgines nisi oculis fidei indesinenter aspicerent, tot aerumnas atque pressuras velut amarum atque multiplicem myrrhae fasciculum nullatenus pertulissent. Plane nisi ad illius summae pulchritudinis accenderentur amplexus, nequaquam de aula regis eremum facerent, et, inter carnales et lubricos homines, omnes carnis illecebras per tres fere annorum hebdomadas jugis continentiae mucrone truncarent. Erat enim eis, sicut dicitur: «guttur sponsi suavissimum, et totus desiderabilis (Cant. V).» Suavissimum sponsi guttur, interior est dulcedo verborum. In verbis etenim Christi quamplures intelligunt facile superficiem, paucis vero datum est interiorem penetrare dulcedinem, de qua per Prophetam dicitur: «Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus (Psal. XXXIII).» Sed qui suavis est in gutture, amarum sapit in ore. Unde scriptum est: «Labia illius labia distillantia myrrham primam (Cant. V).»

Labia igitur sponsi, verba sunt Redemptoris. Quae profecto myrrham distillant, quia per mortificationem et amaritudinem carnis perveniendum esse docent ad suavitatem internae dulcedinis.

Here therefore the beloved becomes a bundle of myrrh, because in all his actions showing himself as if extinct, he collects in a certain way a multiple handful of the mortification of Christ. Let therefore the most blessed virgins sing together, who, having one bridegroom, have not known jealousy, and just as through the glue of charity they fuse one soul out of two, so as if with one mouth let them say singularly: 'A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me.' Where it is also aptly added: 'He shall abide between my breasts.' No one doubts that the place of the heart is between the breasts of the chest.

The beloved therefore abides between the breasts of each virgin, because his unfailing love and desire is not deleted from their memory. 'He shall abide between my breasts,' as if she were saying: He who became for me a bundle of myrrh through the bitterness of the passion, abides continually between my breasts through the sweetness of the heart; and he who from without exasperates me through the example of the death he underwent, from within sweetens me through infused grace of intimate sweetness; as the bride says again of the same: 'My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands (Cant. 5).' White indeed from the glory of divinity, but ruddy through the blood of the passion. But he is called chosen out of thousands, because from all the multitude of the saints he alone is the one who was worthy to hear: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matt. 3, 17).'

Unless these venerable virgins gazed incessantly at this beauty of the beloved with the eyes of faith, they would by no means have endured so many hardships and pressures as if a bitter and multiple bundle of myrrh. Plainly, unless they were enkindled to the embraces of that highest beauty, they would by no means have made a desert of the court of the king, and, among carnal and slippery men, have cut off all the allurements of the flesh through almost three weeks of years with the sword of continual continence. For for them there was, as it is said: 'the throat of the bridegroom most sweet, and he is altogether desirable (Cant. 5).' The most sweet throat of the bridegroom is the interior sweetness of his words. For in the words of Christ very many easily understand the surface, but to few is it given to penetrate the interior sweetness, of which it is said through the Prophet: 'Taste and see that the Lord is sweet (Ps. 33).' But he who is sweet in the throat, tastes bitter in the mouth. Whence it is written: 'His lips are lips distilling the first myrrh (Cant. 5).'

The lips of the bridegroom, therefore, are the words of the Redeemer. Which indeed distill myrrh, because they teach that through the mortification and bitterness of the flesh one must arrive at the sweetness of internal delight.

Per hanc amaritudinis viam, fratres charissimi, nunc cum beatis virginibus studeamus incedere, ut cum eisdem postmodum ad regales aeterni sponsi nuptias mereamur cum benedictione dulcedinis introire. Ab hujus nos aeterni aviditate convivii non falsa carnis dulcedo demulceat, non laborum ingruentium asperitas frangat, non sarcina rerum temporalium aggravet, non filiorum affectus, vel charorum quorumlibet necessitudo retentet, non implacabilis erga proximum ira praepediat, non acquirendae vel acquisitae rei sollicitudo restringat. Amputemus a nobis omnes vitiorum male pullulantium spinas, abigamus ab oculis cordis terrenae concupiscentiae tenebras, ut cum beatis virginibus, Flora scilicet et Lucilla, elaboremus florere virtutibus, et in bonorum operum luce vivamus, quatenus per earum vestigia gradientes, dum non haeremus transitoriis, inferamur aeternis: et dum contemnimus mundum, perveniamus ad Christum. Qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sermo XXXVI.

DE SANCTO RUFFINO MARTYRE. (XXX JUN.)

Nostis, fratres charissimi, sicut ex catholicae fidei magisterio didicistis, quia in ultimae discussionis examine, omnes simul et peccatores et justi ante tribunal aeterni Judicis cum suis sunt corporibus exhibendi, Apostolo testante, qui ait: «Omnes nos oportet manifestari ante tribunal Christi, ut referat unusquisque propria corporis, prout gessit sive bonum sive malum (II Cor. V).» Et reprobi quidem ad hoc ut, quia hic cum carne simul et anima Conditoris sui praecepta calcaverunt, cum eadem illic utraque substantia sententiam justae damnationis excipiant, atque utrobique deinceps suppliciorum amaritudinem sentiant, qui, dum viverent, pravis suis delectationibus ex utroque serviebant. Electi autem ut, quia carnem suam nunc cum vitiis et concupiscentiis crucifigere (Galat. V) non desistunt, cum ipsis suis corporibus, quibus videlicet tanquam tabernaculis in divina militia usi sunt, ad supernae claritatis gloriam provehantur; ut, soluto militiae cingulo, unum tunc interior et exterior homo sortiantur quietis perpetuae municipium, qui ad unum pervenerunt per communia bella triumphum. Et quibus una fuit pugna, eadem sit nihilominus et corona. Illud plane erit Sabbatum nostrum, ille septimus legis annus, ille veraciter Jubilaeus (Deut. XV; Levit. XXV). Sabbatum quippe feriatum esse praecipitur, ut aeterna per ilud requies figuretur. Sub ejusdem quoque quietis aeternae vel resurrectionis designandae mysterio, in septimo anno libertas redditur.

Through this way of bitterness, most dear brothers, let us now strive to walk with the blessed virgins, so that with them afterwards we may deserve to enter into the royal nuptials of the eternal bridegroom with the blessing of sweetness. From the greed for this eternal banquet let no false sweetness of the flesh entice us, let no harshness of encroaching labors break us, let no burden of temporal things weigh us down, let no affection for children, or the necessity of any dear ones retain us, let no implacable anger toward a neighbor impede us, let no anxiety for a thing to be acquired or acquired restrain us. Let us cut off from us all the thorns of vices budding evilly, let us drive away from the eyes of the heart the darkness of earthly concupiscence, so that with the blessed virgins, namely Flora and Lucilla, we may labor to flourish in virtues, and live in the light of good works, so that walking through their footsteps, while we do not cling to transitory things, we may be carried into eternal ones: and while we contemn the world, we may arrive at Christ. Who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

Sermon XXXVI.

ON SAINT RUFFINUS, MARTYR. (JUNE 30.)

You know, most dear brothers, as you have learned from the mastery of the Catholic faith, that in the examination of the final discussion, all together, both sinners and the just, must be presented before the tribunal of the eternal Judge with their bodies, the Apostle testifying, who says: 'We must all be manifested before the tribunal of Christ, so that each one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he has done, whether good or evil (2 Cor. 5).' And the reprobate indeed for this purpose, that because here with flesh and soul together they trampled upon the precepts of their Creator, there with the same both substances they may receive the sentence of just damnation, and thereafter feel the bitterness of punishments on both sides, who, while they lived, served their depraved delights from both. But the elect that, because they do not cease now to crucify their flesh with its vices and concupiscences (Gal. 5), with those very bodies of theirs, which namely they used as it were tabernacles in the divine warfare, they may be promoted to the glory of supernal clarity; so that, the belt of warfare being loosened, the interior and exterior man may then obtain one citizenship (*municipium*) of perpetual rest, who arrived at one triumph through common wars. And to whom there was one battle, let there be nonetheless one and the same crown. That plainly will be our Sabbath, that seventh year of the law, that truly the Jubilee (Deut. 15; Lev. 25). For the Sabbath is commanded to be kept holy (*feriatum*), so that eternal rest may be figured through it. Also under the mystery of designating that same eternal rest or resurrection, in the seventh year liberty is restored.

In Jubilaeo autem tubis clangitur ut unusquisque ad possessionem propriam revertatur. «Canet enim tuba, sicut dicit Apostolus, et mortui, qui in Christo sunt, resurgent (I Cor. XV).» Ad possessiones ergo proprias omnes tunc revertuntur, quia in illo ultimae resurrectionis die unusquisque proprium corpus recipit, in quo, dum praesentem vitam duceret, habitavit.

Ad possessiones ergo proprias omnes tunc revertuntur, quia in illo ultimae resurrectionis die unusquisque proprium corpus recipit, in quo, dum praesentem vitam duceret, habitavit. Tunc Adam, tunc Noe, tunc omnes antiqui Patres, imo omnes mortalium animae ad amissam carnis suae terram redeunt, qui recepta corpora sua in perpetuum possidebunt, et perducti in libertatem filiorum Dei, jam secure gaudebunt omnes servili vinculo corruptionis humanae soluti.

Cum ergo sanctorum corpora tantae futura sint dignitatis ut et coronam vitae perpetuae et immortalitatis stolam cum suis animabus sint communiter receptura; quid mirum si nunc omnipotens Deus apta illis loca provideat, et eorum tumulos non passim vel per casum fieri, sed ex suae voluntatis electione disponat? Enim vero et illud saepe non otiose quaeritur cur Abraham, qui se ex parte corporis pulverem esse confitetur et cinerem (Gen. XVIII), tam ambitiosam sepulturae suae providentiam habuit, ut ex omni peregrinationis suae latitudine solam Hebron, Chananitidis videlicet regionis, eligeret, in qua etiam non parva summa speluncam sibi duplicem compararet? (Gen. XXIII.) Jacob quoque filios, et Joseph fratres suos, obtestantes adjurant ut eorum ossa ad eamdem speluncam post obitum transferant (Gen. XLIX). Quid est ergo quod sancti viri, qui et praesentem vitam et omnem mundi gloriam sublimi mentis arce despexerant, tam cupide, tam anxie, tam studiose de loco ubi eorum conderentur cineres, litigabant, nisi quia per prophetae spiritum noverant Salvatorem mundi illic de suo semine nasciturum, et sanguinem qui mundi peccata dilueret in illa specialiter regione fundendum? Sicut per Psalmistam dicitur: «Quia Deus noster ante saecula operatus est salutem in medio terrae (Psal. LXXIII).» Quod nimirum quanquam de ipso Domini corpore specialiter possit intelligi, de regione tamen illa quoque ubi pati dignatus est, quae certe mundi meditullium est, non incongrue dici videtur.

In Chananaeae igitur terra sancti Patres nostri tumulos elegerunt, ut inde illi mererentur quandoque resurgere, ubi ipse resurrectionis auctor, Primogenitus videlicet vivorum et mortuorum in se dignatus est resurrectionis gloriam declarare. Et quid amplius dicam de honore, quem bonorum remunerator Deus sanctorum suorum corporibus exhibet? quandoquidem ipse Deus omnipotens Moysis corpus dignatus est sepelire (Deut. XXXIV), et Elisei cadaver, mortuum legitur suscitasse (IV Reg. XIII).

But in the Jubilee the trumpets are sounded so that each one may return to his own possession. 'For the trumpet shall sound,' as the Apostle says, 'and the dead who are in Christ shall rise (1 Cor. 15).' To their own possessions, therefore, all then return, because on that day of the final resurrection each one receives his own body, in which he dwelt while he led this present life.

To their own possessions, therefore, all then return, because on that day of the final resurrection each one receives his own body, in which he dwelt while he led this present life. Then Adam, then Noah, then all the ancient Fathers, indeed all the souls of mortals return to the lost land of their flesh, who will possess their received bodies forever, and led into the liberty of the sons of God, all will now securely rejoice, loosed from the servile bond of human corruption.

Since therefore the bodies of the saints are going to be of such great dignity that they are to receive commonly with their souls both the crown of perpetual life and the stole of immortality; what wonder if almighty God now provides suitable places for them, and disposes that their tombs be made not everywhere or by chance, but from the election of his own will? For indeed that also is often asked not idly, why Abraham, who confesses himself as to the part of the body to be dust and ashes (Gen. 18), had such ambitious providence for his burial, that out of all the latitude of his pilgrimage he should choose only Hebron, namely of the Canaanite region, in which also for a not small sum he should purchase for himself a double cave? (Gen. 23.) Jacob also adjures his sons, and Joseph his brothers, calling them to witness, that they transfer their bones to the same cave after death (Gen. 49). What is it therefore that holy men, who had despised both the present life and all the glory of the world from the sublime citadel of the mind, were litigating so greedily, so anxiously, so studiously about the place where their ashes should be stored, except because through the spirit of the prophet they knew that the Savior of the world would be born there from their seed, and the blood which would wash away the sins of the world was to be shed specifically in that region? As it is said through the Psalmist: 'Because our God before the ages worked salvation in the midst of the earth (Ps. 73).' Which indeed although it can be understood specifically of the Lord's body itself, yet of that region also where he deigned to suffer, which is certainly the center (*meditullium*) of the world, it seems to be said not incongruously.

In the land of Canaan, therefore, our holy Fathers chose tombs, so that they might deserve to rise from there one day, where the author of the resurrection himself, namely the Firstborn of the living and the dead, deigned to declare in himself the glory of the resurrection. And what more shall I say about the honor which God, the remunerator of the good, exhibits to the bodies of his saints? Since almighty God himself deigned to bury the body of Moses (Deut. 34), and it is read that the corpse of Elisha raised a dead man (4 Kings 13).

Imo, ut verum fatear, quod in carne viventibus sanctis minime contulit, hoc saepe divina dispensatio mortuis praerogavit. Quod in Abdo scilicet viro Dei liquido perpenditur, quem viventem quidem leo potuit occisurus invadere, sed cadaver ejus nequaquam permissus est aliquatenus violare (III Reg. XIII). «Pretiosa nimirum in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus (Psal. CXV).» Non ergo mirum si divina dispensatio congrua sanctorum corporibus loca distribuit, et nunc quasi quoddam depositum terrae commendat, quae postmodum regnis coelestibus transferenda restituat. Sed jam, propter quod ista praemisimus, de B. Ruffini miraculis breviter aliqua perstringamus.

Beati igitur hujus martyris corpus de Suburbio Assisiensis oppidi, ubi antiquitus fuerat positum, intra moenia postmodum fuit gentilis impetus terrore translatum. Labrum autem lapideum, in quo praedictum corpus ante jacuerat, per longum tempus extra muros fuerat derelictum. De quo nimirum inter populum et Ugonem ejusdem tunc sedis episcopum gravis est orta seditio. Episcopus siquidem ad ecclesiam B. Mariae semper virginis, quae eo loci prima sedes est, deferendum esse censebat, eo nimirum consilio ut quod mater ecclesia corpus martyris non haberet, quodam saltem vacui sepulcri solatio compensaret. Econtra populus asserebat inter sacras reliquias et proprium tumulum divisionem fieri non debere, nec humanis nunc adinventionibus permutandum, quod ab ipso gloriosi martyris consummato triumpho videretur divinitus institutum. Taliter igitur hinc atque inde certantibus labrum moenibus urbis infertur, et ab utrisque simul partibus ad bivii cujusdam compitum pervenitur.

Illic itaque cum fautores episcopi ad S. Mariae, reliqua autem pars populi ad B. Ruffini basilicam sacrum vasculum pertrahere molirentur; his atque illis in diversa nitentibus, crescente jurgio, eo usque processum est, ut furentes arma corriperent, et mutuos inter se ictus amissa confusae mentis ratione miscerent. Vibratis itaque gladiis cominus utrinque concurritur, et acres ardentibus animis ad infligenda mutuo vulnera debacchantur. Sed, o praedicanda divina clementia, quae humanis miseretur erroribus, et saepe pravis nostris voluntatibus obviat, ut ad bonos exitus ipsa etiam male coepta perducat! Quid multis morer? Nullus illic vulneratur, nulla denique nec tenuis quidem gutta sanguinis funditur, atque, ut mirabilibus adhuc mirabiliora succedant, sexaginta fere viri ex parte episcopi praedictum vasculum ad ecclesiam B. Mariae conabantur attrahere, sed nullis illud nisibus de loci sui fixa potuerunt statione movere.

Indeed, to confess the truth, that which he by no means conferred on the saints living in the flesh, this divine dispensation often bestowed on the dead. Which is clearly weighed in Abdo, the man of God indeed, whom while living a lion could invade to kill him, but his corpse was by no means permitted to be violated in any way (3 Kings 13). 'Precious indeed in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints (Ps. 115).' It is not wonder therefore if divine dispensation distributes suitable places for the bodies of the saints, and now commits them to the earth as if a certain deposit, which it may thereafter restore to be transferred to the heavenly kingdoms. But now, for the sake of which we have premised these things, let us briefly touch upon some of the miracles of the Blessed Ruffinus.

Therefore, the body of this blessed martyr was afterwards translated from the Suburb of the town of Assisi, where it had been placed anciently, within the walls because of the terror of a pagan (*gentilis*) attack. But the stone basin (*labrum*), in which the aforesaid body had lain before, had been left outside the walls for a long time. Concerning which indeed a grave sedition arose between the people and Hugo, then bishop of the same see. For the bishop was of the opinion that it should be brought to the church of the Blessed Mary ever virgin, which is the first see in that place, certainly with that counsel so that because the mother church did not have the body of the martyr, it might be compensated with at least some solace of an empty sepulcher. On the contrary, the people asserted that a division should not be made between the sacred relics and the proper tomb, nor should what seemed divinely instituted from the consummated triumph of the glorious martyr himself be changed now by human inventions. Thus therefore with those on this side and that side contending, the basin is brought within the walls of the city, and from both parts together they arrive at the crossing of a certain fork in the road.

There, therefore, when the supporters of the bishop were striving to pull the sacred vessel to St. Mary's, but the rest of the part of the people to the basilica of St. Ruffinus; with these and those striving in different directions, the quarrel increasing, it proceeded to such a point that they caught up arms in a fury, and mixed mutual blows among themselves, the reason of their confused minds being lost. Therefore, with swords brandished, they clash at close quarters on both sides, and sharp with burning minds they rave to inflict wounds on one another. But, O divine clemency to be proclaimed, which has mercy on human errors, and often meets our depraved wills, so that it may lead even things evilly begun to good exits! Why should I delay with many things? No one is wounded there, finally not even a thin drop of blood is shed, and, so that more wonderful things may succeed to wonderful ones, about sixty men on the part of the bishop were trying to drag the aforesaid vessel to the church of St. Mary, but by no efforts were they able to move it from the fixed station of its place.

Illi igitur cum jam prae lassitudine fracti omnino deficerent, et vehiculum lapidis funditus desperarent, tunc ex altera parte vix septem homines urnam corripientes, ad S. Ruffini basilicam tanta illam permissi sunt celeritate pervehere, ac si non lapidem, sed palearum potius viderentur fasciculum detulisse. Illico populi clamor exsultantis attollitur, gratiarum actio fautori Deo laeta persolvitur, et quia pius Deus unum cum populo suo senserit ab omnibus alacriter divulgatur. Tunc denique probatum est verum esse quod dicitur: Vox populi, vox Dei.

Accessit autem ad rei certitudinem et presbyter quidam, ab ipso videlicet B. Ruffino ad episcopum missus. Nam cum praefatus episcopus adversus eos qui sibi restiterant, non leviter commotus esset, atque illi pararent sibi digne satisfacere, et devota illum humilitate placare, presbytero quem diximus, per visum beatus martyr apparuit, eique dixit: Vade, et dic episcopo, si me non vult offendere, satisfactionem quamlibet a populo non recipiat, sed gratis ei puram sui amoris et benedictionis gratiam reddat. Mea siquidem hoc gestum est voluntate, ut vasculum illud ad meam deferretur ecclesiam; quatenus meum in eo corpusculum denuo recondatur. Noverit etiam quia, nisi ego illis tumultuantibus interessem meque eorum telis opponerem, magna hominum strages fusa jaceret. Sed cum episcopus adhuc haesitans, ne his quidem verbis presbyteri fidem accommodare disponeret, ecce quidam, qui contractus fuerat, gaudens et exsultans eodem die a beato se Ruffino fatebatur erectum, sibique ab eodem beato martyre hoc mandatum perhibebat injunctum, ut haec ipsa cuncta per ordinem, quae presbyter asserebat, ipse quoque nihilominus episcopo nuntiaret. Tandem episcopus, omni scrupulo dubietatis amoto, quod sibi imperatum est incunctanter exsequitur, atque in gratiam suo populo donatis offensionibus foederatur.

Sed, ne apud aliquem fortassis episcopus naevum reprehensionis incurrat quia ab ecclesia sua ad horam dissidens contra Dei judicium sentiebat, Isaac ad memoriam reducendus est, qui non Esau, a se videlicet electum, sed Jacob potius ab uxore suppositum benedixit (Gen. XXVII). Et illic ergo carnalis uxor, et hic spiritualis sponsa viris suis in propriae sententiae diversitate praevaluit, quia qui mundi infirma elegit, ut confundat fortia (I Cor. I), Deus utrique consensit. Propheta quoque David construere templum voluit (II Reg. VII), sed hoc illi superna dispositio non permisit.

Those therefore when they were now failing altogether, broken by weariness, and were utterly despairing of the vehicle of the stone, then from the other part scarcely seven men catching up the urn, were permitted to convey it to the basilica of St. Ruffinus with such speed, as if they seemed to have brought not a stone, but rather a bundle of straw. Immediately the shout of the exulting people is raised, happy thanksgiving is paid to God the supporter, and because pious God felt one with his people it is eagerly broadcast by all. Then finally it was proven to be true what is said: The voice of the people, the voice of God.

Moreover, there was added to the certainty of the matter also a certain priest, sent namely by the Blessed Ruffinus himself to the bishop. For when the aforesaid bishop was not lightly moved against those who had resisted him, and they were preparing to satisfy him worthily, and to placate him with devoted humility, the blessed martyr appeared in a vision to the priest whom we mentioned, and said to him: Go, and tell the bishop, if he does not wish to offend me, let him not receive any satisfaction from the people, but let him freely return to them the pure grace of his love and blessing. For this was done by my will, that that vessel should be brought to my church; so that my little body (*corpusculum*) may be hidden in it again. Let him also know that, unless I had been present among those rioting and had opposed myself to their weapons, a great slaughter of men would lie shed abroad. But when the bishop, still hesitating, was not disposed to accommodate faith even to these words of the priest, behold a certain man, who had been crippled (*contractus*), confessed that he had been raised up on that same day by the blessed Ruffinus, rejoicing and exulting, and he asserted that this mandate had been enjoined on him by the same blessed martyr, that he too should nonetheless announce to the bishop these same things in order which the priest was asserting. At length the bishop, all scruple of doubt having been removed, follows what was commanded him without delay, and is allied in grace to his people, their offenses having been forgiven.

But, lest perhaps the bishop incur the blemish of reprehension with anyone because, dissenting from his church for an hour, he was feeling against the judgment of God, Isaac is to be called to memory, who blessed not Esau, chosen namely by himself, but Jacob rather substituted by his wife (Gen. 27). And there therefore the carnal wife, and here the spiritual bride prevailed over their husbands in the diversity of their proper opinion, because God, who chose the weak things of the world to confound the strong (1 Cor. 1), consented to both. The prophet David also wished to build a temple (2 Kings 7), but the supernal disposition did not permit him this.

Inter Paulum quoque et Barnabam pro Joanne quoddam legimus intervenisse dissidium (Act. XV), propter quod tamen non solum utriusque apostoli non imminutum est meritum, sed ipse quoque discipulus ab apostolicae disciplinae linea non erravit. Non ergo mirum si nunc homo aliquando inscius a veritate dissentiat, cum et ipsis apostolis, et prophetis, humanitatis aliquid accidisse Scripturarum auctoritas probet. Sed haec alias, nunc ad proposita redeamus.

Porro eodem die duo caeci ad altare beati martyris illuminati sunt. Sed et alius debilitatus membris et gibberosus erectus est et saluti per omnia restitutus. De quibus porro miraculis duntaxat quid factum sit, nobis referre sufficiat; ne si qualiter facta singula per rei gestae ordinem referre contendimus, auditores fortasse, quod absit! laciniosi styli prolixitate gravemus. Ipsa quoque miracula enumerando, persequi cuncta negligimus, sed velut ex magno quodam flumine cyathum haurientes trahimus, quem super mensam Christi convivantibus salubriter propinemus, ne mentis stomachus ingurgitatione gravari, sed sobrio potu tantummodo sitis possit auferri. Ad alia igitur adhuc enarranda miracula, quae per eumdem beatissimum martyrem divinitus sunt ostensa, pergamus.

His ita transactis, coepit non parva inquisitio fieri quo die invectissimi triumphatoris Christi Ruffini deberet martyrium celebrari. Nullis siquidem apud eos exstantibus historiae monimentis, sola erant eatetenus annuae dedicationis solemnitate contenti. Tandem auctore Deo reperta passionis historia constituit venerabilis pontifex, juxta tenorem videlicet quem litterae testabantur, ut tertio Kalendas Augusti ejusdem gloriosi martyris festivitas coleretur. At nonnulli adversus episcopum invidiae facibus accensi, et vesaniae spiritu implicabiliter incitati, tumultuabantur, onerosum esse dicentes, populum geminatis unius sancti solemnitatibus feriari, superstitiosumque esse domesticis adinventas studiis festivitates noviter introduci, ad summam, non fabricatum hoc religionis amore, sed ardore pecuniae. Praesertim autem quidam protervi homines, qui a vocabulo loci, quem incolunt, Insulani vocantur, ipso praeclarae festivitatis die irreverenter abutentes, coeperunt cum suis mulierculis non modo textrinis operibus audacter insistere, verum etiam ruralibus exercitiis liberius insudare. Sed protinus in eos sententia divinae animadversionis ulciscitur, et flagellis eruditi ad cor redeunt, qui cor habere in prosperitate noluerunt. Ut eis aptissime congruere videatur quod per prophetam dicitur: «Redite, praevaricatores, ad cor (Isa. XLVI).» Illud etiam: «Et nunc ignis adversarius consumit.»

Between Paul also and Barnabas we read that a certain dissension intervened concerning John (Acts 15), because of which however not only was the merit of both apostles not diminished, but the disciple himself also did not err from the line of apostolic discipline. It is not wonder therefore if a man now sometimes unknowingly dissents from the truth, since the authority of the Scriptures proves that something of humanity happened to the apostles themselves and the prophets. But these things elsewhere, now let us return to the proposed things.

Furthermore on the same day two blind men were illuminated at the altar of the blessed martyr. But also another, weakened in his limbs and hunchbacked, was raised up and restored to health in all things. Concerning which miracles furthermore let it suffice for us to report only what was done; lest if we strive to report each fact through the order of the thing done, we should perhaps—which far be it!—burden the listeners with the prolixity of a verbose style. In enumerating the miracles themselves also, we neglect to pursue everything, but drawing as if from a certain great river we pull a cupful, which we may healthfully offer to those feasting at the table of Christ, lest the stomach of the mind be burdened by gorging, but thirst may be taken away only by a sober drink. Let us proceed therefore to still other miracles to be related, which were divinely shown through the same most blessed martyr.

After these things were thus transacted, a no small inquiry began to be made on which day the martyrdom of the most unconquered victor of Christ, Ruffinus, ought to be celebrated. For since no monuments of history were extant among them, they were hitherto content only with the annual solemnity of the dedication. At length, by the authorship of God, the history of the passion having been found, the venerable pontiff established, namely according to the tenor which the letters testified, that the festival of the same glorious martyr should be cultivated on the third Kalends of August. But some, kindled against the bishop with the torches of envy, and inextricably incited by a spirit of madness, were rioting, saying that it was burdensome for the people to have a holiday for the doubled solemnities of one saint, and that it was superstitious for festivities newly introduced to be invented by domestic studies; in short, that this was not fabricated out of love of religion, but out of the heat for money. But especially certain forward men, who from the name of the place which they inhabit are called Insulani, irreverently abusing the very day of the illustrious festival, began not only to insist boldly on the works of the loom, but even to sweat more freely in rural exercises. But immediately the sentence of divine animadversion avenged itself upon them, and having been instructed by scourges, they return to the heart, who refused to have a heart in prosperity. So that what is said through the prophet seems most aptly to agree with them: "Return, ye transgressors, to the heart (Isa. 46)." Also that: "And now the fire consumes the adversary."

Nam casas eorum repente flamma corripuit, et non solum domestica quaeque, sed quae in agris erant, omnia inexstinguibilibus conflagravit; adeo ut infelices illi in extremis jam periculis constituti, ad amnem hinc inde confluerent, et in ipsum gurgitis alveum accensa quaeque jactarent. Sed ut perspicue probaretur hoc non casum, sed divini furoris esse indicium, quidquid mergebatur, exstingui non poterat.

Miro itaque modo elementum illud vires sui juris et partim tenebat et ex parte perdiderat. Nam et liquida erat aqua, ut immersa quaeque fluctu dehiscente reciperet, et quodammodo humida non erat, ut ardentia exstinguere posset. Sed quid minimis immoror, cum et ipsa hominum membra flamma prosiliens occupaverit, et exstinctionis remedium invenire, quocunque se verterent, non valerent? Tandem ustulati, fumigati et in modum torris combusti, cum magnis ululatuum stridoribus ad B. Ruffini altare confugiunt, indulgentiam petunt, et commissi piaculi emendationem de caetero per poenitentiam pollicentur. Precibus igitur beatissimi martyris ab incendii doloribus liberati, incolumes ad propria sunt reversi. Ab illo itaque tempore absque ullo cunctationis obstaculo B. Ruffini martyrium colitur, et die quam praediximus, cum magnae devotionis instantia ad ejus ecclesiam a populis undique convenitur.

Illud quoque praetereundum esse non arbitror, quod viri quidam trabem de silva operosa exercitiis levigatam ad B. Ruffini vectare ecclesiam conabantur, quibus nimirum quidam Perusinorum violentiam ingerentes lignum hostiliter extorserunt. Sed cum raptores arborem instantissimi conatus anxietate pertraherent, jam jam Perusinis moenibus uno vix interjacente milliario propinquarent, repente vehiculum haesit, nullisque virium nisibus impelli ulterius potuit. Interea contigui quique homines ad auxilium confluunt, non pauci etiam jugarii boves adduntur. Ordinant diligentius machinam, invicem exhortantur, in robur se colligunt, armos objiciunt, vociferanter impingunt, lignum tamen immobile permanet, ac si fixum radicibus teneretur. Demum magistra necessitas docuit quod caeca hominum pravitas ignorabat. Mens namque eorum perpetrati criminis conscia, licet sero, liquido cognovit quia, qui de beati martyris substantia rapinam fecerant, merito illis divina virtus obstabat. Mutato itaque repente consilio, Assisium versus illico vehiculum dirigunt, et, accelerandi facultate percepta, beatissimo martyri, quod superbe rapuerant, humiliter reddunt.

For flame suddenly seized their houses, and not only all domestic things, but everything that was in the fields, it burned with unquenchable conflagration; so much so that those unhappy ones, already placed in extreme dangers, flocked together to the river on this side and that, and cast into the very channel of the abyss everything that was set on fire. But so that it might be clearly proved that this was not chance, but an indication of divine fury, whatever was submerged could not be extinguished.

Thus in a wonderful way that element both held the powers of its own right in part and had lost them in part. For the water was both liquid, so that it might receive everything immersed in its gaping wave, and in a certain way it was not moist, so that it might be able to extinguish the burning things. But why do I linger on the smallest things, since the leaping flame also occupied the very members of the men, and they were not able to find the remedy of extinction, wherever they turned themselves? At length, scorched, smoked, and burned in the manner of a firebrand, they flee with great gnashing of wailings to the altar of Blessed Ruffinus, they seek indulgence, and they promise for the rest the emendation of the committed crime through penance. Therefore, having been freed from the pains of the fire by the prayers of the most blessed martyr, they returned unharmed to their own places. Therefore from that time the martyrdom of Blessed Ruffinus is cultivated without any obstacle of hesitation, and on the day which we predicted, the people from everywhere come together to his church with the persistence of great devotion.

I also do not think that that ought to be passed over, that certain men were striving to carry a beam from the forest, smoothed by laborious exercises, to the church of Blessed Ruffinus; from whom namely certain of the Perusians, bringing violence, hostiley extorted the wood. But when the robbers were dragging the tree with the anxiety of most persistent effort, and were just now approaching the walls of Perugia with scarcely one mile interjacent, suddenly the vehicle stuck, and could be impelled no further by any efforts of strength. Meanwhile, all the neighboring men flock together for help, and not a few yoked oxen are added. They arrange the machine more diligently, they exhort each other in turn, they collect themselves in strength, they throw their shoulders against it, they push vociferously, yet the wood remains immobile, as if it were held fixed by roots. At last mistress necessity taught what the blind depravity of men was ignorant of. For their mind, conscious of the perpetrated crime, although late, clearly recognized that divine virtue was deservedly standing in their way, who had made a robbery from the substance of the blessed martyr. Therefore, the counsel having been suddenly changed, they direct the vehicle immediately toward Assisi, and, the faculty of accelerating having been perceived, they humbly return to the most blessed martyr what they had proudly snatched.

Agamus igitur Christo Salvatori nostro gratias, et digna laudum praeconia referamus, qui, dum per cives supernae Hierusalem talia nobis beneficia praerogat, tanquam per exiguas micas ac tenues ad plenum nos convivium mensae coelestis invitat; et dum illos jam post laborem quiescentes in patria ubertim satiat, nos etiam in hujus peregrinationis itinere quasi quibusdam ciborum reliquiis utcunque sustentat; imo qui illos solido suae visionis cibo reficit, quodam nos signorum suorum lacte tanquam parvulos nutrit, donec occurramus omnes in virum perfectum in mensuram aetatis plenitudinis Christi (Ephes. IV), qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat Deus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

AUGUSTUS.

II. Sermo de S. Stephano papa et martyre.
VI. Sermo de SS. Donato et Hilariano martyribus.
XIII. Sermo de S. Cassiano martyre.
XV. Sermo de Assumptione Beatissimae Mariae Virginis.
XXIV Sermo I de S. Bartholomaeo apostolo. Sermo II de eodem.

Sermo XXXVII.

DE SANCTO STEPHANO PAPA ET MARTYRE (II AUG.)

Audistis hodie, fratres charissimi, militem Christi adversus membra diaboli viriliter dimicantem; audistis egregium ducem populi Christiani commilitones suos ad procinctum gloriosi certaminis constanter ac fiducialiter exhortantem. Lege quippe tyrannica tunc decretum erat ut quisquis occultum quemlibet proderet Christianum, non solum universas ejus facultates acciperet, sed ad honorem quoque militiae, quem eligeret, sacrilega eum remuneratio sublimaret. Tunc B. Stephanus, utpote primipilus Christianae militiae et signifer imperatoris aeterni, congregavit cuneos bellatorum et telis aggressus est armare, virtutem exhortans atque suadens ut et peritura terrenae facultatis lucra contemnerent, et infinitam persecutorum rabiem non timerent. Pellebat a pavidorum mente formidinem, et rudes tironum animos ad agonem divini certaminis accendebat. Quod etiam per Moysen in lege praeceptum est: «Appropinquante, inquit, jam praelio, stabit sacerdos ante aciem, et sic loquetur ad populum: Audi Israel, vos hodie contra inimicos vestros pugnam committitis, non pertimescat cor vestrum, nolite metuere, nolite cedere, nec formidetis eos, quia Dominus Deus vester in medio vestri est, et pro vobis contra adversarios dimicabit, ut eruat vos de periculo (Deut. XX).»

Let us therefore give thanks to Christ our Savior, and let us report worthy heraldries of praise, who, while he provides such benefits to us through the citizens of the supernal Jerusalem, invites us as if through small and thin crumbs to the full banquet of the heavenly table; and while he abundantly satisfies those now resting in the fatherland after labor, he also sustains us in the journey of this pilgrimage in some way as if by certain remains of food; yea, he who refreshes them with the solid food of his vision, feeds us with a certain milk of his signs as if little ones, until we all meet into a perfect man, into the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4), who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns as God forever and ever. Amen.

AUGUST.

II. Sermon on St. Stephen, Pope and Martyr.
VI. Sermon on SS. Donatus and Hilarianus, Martyrs.
XIII. Sermon on St. Cassian, Martyr.
XV. Sermon on the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.
XXIV. Sermon I on St. Bartholomew the Apostle. Sermon II on the same.

Sermon XXXVII.

ON SAINT STEPHEN, POPE AND MARTYR (AUG. 2)

You have heard today, dearest brothers, the soldier of Christ manfully fighting against the members of the devil; you have heard the excellent leader of the Christian people constantly and faithfully exhorting his fellow soldiers to the preparation of the glorious contest. For by a tyrannical law it had then been decreed that whoever should betray any hidden Christian, should not only receive all his resources, but sacrilegious remuneration should also sublime him to the honor of the military service which he should choose. Then Blessed Stephen, as the captain (*primipilus*) of the Christian military and the standard-bearer of the eternal Emperor, gathered the troops of warriors and began to arm them with weapons, exhorting and persuading virtue so that they might both despise the perishing gains of earthly resources, and not fear the infinite madness of the persecutors. He was driving away dread from the minds of the fearful, and was kindling the raw souls of the recruits to the struggle (*agon*) of the divine contest. Which was also commanded through Moses in the law: "When the battle is now approaching," he says, "the priest shall stand before the battle line, and shall speak thus to the people: Hear, O Israel, you today commit battle against your enemies, let not your heart be afraid, do not fear, do not yield, nor dread them, because the Lord your God is in the midst of you, and will fight for you against the adversaries, so that he may rescue you from danger (Deut. 20)."

Et notandum quod sacerdos, qui imminente jam bello, concionatur, non alibi, sed ante aciem stare praecipitur, ut videlicet eos ad pugnam, quos adhortationibus provocat, ipse quoque praevius antecedat, ne dum alibi ad bellum impellere nititur, ipse degeneri corporis otio per negligentiam dissolvatur, sicut de quibusdam magna praedicantibus, sed desidiose viventibus, per Prophetam dicitur: «Filii Ephrem intendentes arcum, et mittentes sagittas suas, conversi sunt in die belli (Psal. LXXVII).» Qui enim adversus vitiorum tentationes ad conflictum alios provocant, sed confligere ipsi sub ignobili desidiae languore detrectant, hi nimirum sagittas quidem dirigunt, sed post terga conversi consummatae victoriae titulos non merentur: Nec eis prodest quod bene coeperant, quia non usque ad finem magnanimiter perseverant. Unde et de illis protinus sequitur: «Non custodierunt testamentum Dei, et in lege ejus noluerunt ambulare (Ibid.)» Ac si diceret: Susceperunt quidem testamentum, sed non custodierunt: Posuerunt in lege pedem per initium, sed non tenuerunt perseverantiae gressum.

Quisquis ergo ad spiritale certamen alios provocat, quisquis ad fortiter agendum proximorum mentes instigat, debet utique vitam concordare cum lingua, ne, dum aliis proponit excelsa, ipse contentus imis prematur inertia. Hinc est quod in lege praecipitur: «Non habebis, inquit, in sacculo diversa pondera, majus et minus, nec erit in domo tua modius major et minor. Pondus habebis justum, et modius aequalis et verus erit tibi (Deut. XXV).» Enimvero tunc in sacculo diversa pondera non habemus, si intra secretum conscientiae nostrae non aliter nobis, neque aliter aliis judicantes, easdem legalium praeceptorum mensuras apprehendimus nimirum, ut non aliis regulam districtae severitatis indicere, nosmetipsos studeamus remissioris indulgentiae lege tractare. De qua videlicet fraude et Salomon ait: «Abominatio est Domino pondus duplex et statera dolosa (Prov. XX).» Necesse est ergo fruges verbi nequaquam diversis, sed eisdem metiri ponderibus; ut, quae aliis agenda praecipimus, ipsi etiam vivis operibus efficaciter impleamus. Quod profecto B. martyr Stephanus laudabiliter fecit, quia dum alios adhortatur ad pugnam, ipse prius arma corripuit, et in ipsam se constipatae legionis aciem lorica fidei munitus immersit, dumque aliis congrediendi praebet exemplum, ille sortitur ex devicto hoste triumphum; atque, ut ita loquar, dum se sequentibus sternit iter ad pugnam, ipse mox peracta victoria perducitur ad coronam.

And it is to be noted that the priest, who when war is already imminent, harangues, is commanded to stand not elsewhere but before the battle line, so that namely he may himself also go before as a leader those whom he provokes to battle by exhortations, lest while he strives to impel others to war, he himself be dissolved through negligence in the degenerate leisure of the body, as it is said through the Prophet concerning certain ones preaching great things, but living sluggishly: "The sons of Ephraim, bending the bow and sending their arrows, were turned back in the day of battle (Psalm 77)." For those who provoke others to the conflict against the temptations of vices, but themselves refuse to conflict under the ignoble languor of sloth, these namely indeed direct arrows, but having been turned back behind their backs they do not deserve the titles of consummated victory: Nor does it profit them that they had begun well, because they do not magnanimously persevere even to the end. Whence also concerning them it follows immediately: "They did not keep the testament of God, and in his law they would not walk (Ibid.)." As if he said: They indeed received the testament, but they did not keep it: They placed a foot in the law through the beginning, but they did not hold the step of perseverance.

Whoever therefore provokes others to the spiritual contest, whoever instigates the minds of neighbors to acting strongly, ought by all means to harmonize his life with his tongue, lest, while he proposes lofty things to others, he himself, content with the lowest things, be pressed down by inertia. Hence it is that it is commanded in the law: "Thou shalt not have," it says, "in thy bag diverse weights, a greater and a lesser, nor shall there be in thy house a greater and a lesser bushel (*modius*). Thou shalt have a just weight, and the bushel shall be equal and true for thee (Deut. 25)." Indeed then we do not have diverse weights in our bag, if within the secret of our conscience, judging not otherwise for ourselves and not otherwise for others, we apprehend namely the same measures of legal precepts, so as not to indicate a rule of strict severity to others, and study to treat ourselves by a law of more remiss indulgence. Concerning which fraud namely Solomon also says: "A double weight and a deceitful scale (*statera*) is an abomination to the Lord (Prov. 20)." It is necessary therefore to measure the fruits of the word by no means with diverse, but with the same weights; so that, what we command to others to be done, we ourselves also may effectively fulfill by living works. Which indeed Blessed martyr Stephen did laudably, because while he exhorts others to the fight, he himself first snatched up arms, and immersed himself, fortified by the breastplate of faith, into the very battle line of the crowded legion; and while he offers an example of engaging to others, he obtains the triumph from the conquered enemy; and, that I may so speak, while he levels the way to the fight for those following, he himself soon, the victory having been completed, is led to the crown.

Et quia Stephanus exprimitur coronatus, pontifex autem quasi pontem faciens, ac hoc via sequentium dicitur, bene simul utrumque et sui nominis etymologiam exhibuit, et officium pontificatus implevit, quia nimirum dum ad sancti agonis stadium viam sequentibus aperit, a justo remuneratore Deo coronam gloriae felix triumphator accepit.

Verumtamen quis iste B. Stephanus fuerit genere, quotus etiam, sive quotannis in apostolici regiminis successione, non superfluum ducimus si, prout in Catalogo summorum Pontificum reperitur, charitati vestrae breviter exponamus. Hic itaque B. Stephanus natione Romanus, ex patre Jobio [Julio], beato principi apostolorum Petro vigesimus quartus in Romanae sedis dignitate successit. Sedit autem septem annos, menses quinque, dies duos. Iste constituit ut sacerdotes et levitae nequaquam quotidiano usu sacris vestibus uterentur, sed in ecclesia tantum. Ordinavit autem episcopos tres, presbyteros sex, diaconos quinque. Cui B. Sixtus in pontificatu successit, aeque postmodum felicis martyrii gloria coronandus.

O beata mater Ecclesia, cui mors ad vitam militat, crudelitas persequentium ignara ministrat, cui videlicet et mors parit in aeternitate victuros, et poenalis oppressio generat perpetuo regnaturos! Beata, inquam, et vere felix Ecclesia, cui et ignominiae confusio gloriam, et tormenta victoriam, et vincula sive carceres libertatem pariunt sempiternam! Hic est profecto ager ille Dominicus, in quo grana tritici moritura quidem decidunt, sed multiplicatis postmodum frugibus rediviva nascuntur (Joan. XII). Haec est area illa Areuna [Ornan.] Jebusaei, in qua videlicet hostias David pacificas obtulit, et furorem Domini, repressa ab Israel ultoris gladii internecione, placavit (II Reg. XXIV). In hac area sive torculari Gedeon frumenta purgabat excutiens, cum videre angelum meruit, et ejus oraculo quia ipse Israel de manu Madian liberaturus esset agnovit (Jud. VI). In hac area Abel de primogenitis gregis sui et eorum adipibus obtulit, quae profecto divina gratia, quia grate suscepit, illico, sicut vetus testatur editio, coelitus inflammavit (Gen. IV). In hac etiam Cain de frugibus terrae munera obtulit, quae Dominus despexit, atque ideo non respexit (Ibid). In hac siquidem area, sicut sunt quaedam ex tritura, quae ignibus debentur, ita etiam sunt nonnulli de trituratoribus ipsis, qui simul ad ignem tendunt. Sive enim de justis, sive de peccatoribus, vera est Joannis sententia quae dicit: «Opera enim illorum sequuntur illos (Apoc. XIV).»

And because Stephen is expressed as "crowned," but the Pontiff is so called as "making a bridge" (*pontem faciens*), and by this the "way of those following," he well exhibited both at the same time, the etymology of his name and fulfilled the office of the pontificate, because namely while he opens the way to those following to the stadium of the holy struggle, the happy victor received the crown of glory from God the just remunerator.

Nevertheless, who this Blessed Stephen was by race, or how many-eth, or for how many years in the succession of the apostolic regime, we do not think it superfluous if, as it is found in the Catalog of the Supreme Pontiffs, we briefly set forth to your charity. This Blessed Stephen therefore, a Roman by nation, from his father Jobius [Julius], succeeded the blessed prince of the apostles, Peter, as twenty-fourth in the dignity of the Roman see. Moreover, he sat for seven years, five months, two days. He established that priests and levites should by no means use sacred vestments for daily use, but only in the church. Moreover, he ordained three bishops, six priests, five deacons. Whom Blessed Sixtus succeeded in the pontificate, equally to be crowned afterwards with the glory of happy martyrdom.

O blessed mother Church, for whom death militates unto life, the ignorant cruelty of persecutors ministers, for whom namely both death brings forth those who will live in eternity, and penal oppression generates those who will reign perpetually! Blessed, I say, and truly happy Church, for whom both the confusion of ignominy brings forth glory, and torments victory, and chains or prisons eternal liberty! This is indeed that field of the Lord, in which the grains of wheat fall indeed to die, but are born reborn with fruits afterwards multiplied (John 12). This is that threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, in which namely David offered peaceful hosts, and placated the fury of the Lord, the carnage of the avenging sword having been repressed from Israel (2 Kings 24). In this threshing floor or winepress Gideon was purging the grains by shaking them out, when he deserved to see the angel, and by his oracle he recognized that he himself was about to deliver Israel from the hand of Midian (Judges 6). In this threshing floor Abel offered from the firstborn of his flock and their fat, which indeed divine grace, because it received them gratefully, immediately, as the old edition witnesses, inflamed from heaven (Gen. 4). In this also Cain offered gifts from the fruits of the earth, which the Lord despised, and therefore did not look upon (Ibid.). In this indeed threshing floor, just as there are some from the threshing which are owed to the fires, so also there are some of the threshers themselves, who tend at the same time to the fire. For whether concerning the just, or concerning sinners, true is the sentence of John which says: "For their works follow them (Apoc. 14)."

Attendite, fratres mei dilectissimi, considerate, perpendite quia tota universalis Ecclesia omni terrarum orbe diffusa una est area sic bonis ac malis, justis atque perversis, tanquam zizaniis et tritico, tanquam paleis ac frugibus plena. Sed quousque triturare terrae cultor incipiat, omnia indifferenter area continet, et quae recondenda sunt horreis, et quae tradenda sunt flammis. Sed quid est in area flammis obnoxium, quid horreis reservandum, nisi quod Joannes Baptista in Evangelio manifeste discernit cum de Domino loquens, ait: «Cujus ventilabrum in manu ejus, et purgabit aream suam, et congregabit triticum in horreum suum, paleas autem comburet igni inexstinguibili?» (Matth. III) Sed unde discernimus utrum paleae an triticum simus? Ex gravitate profecto morum vel inconstantia, ex pondere vel levitate. Quisquis enim voluptatum aura raptatur, quisquis turbine furoris impellitur, quem modo superbiae spiritus inaniter levat, modo moeror vel injuria illata praecipitat, hic profecto palea vel arundo dicenda est. Quod utique Joannes esse negatur, cum de illo ex ore Veritatis dicitur: «Quid existis in desertum videre? arundinem vento agitatam?» (Matth. XI.) Quod contra de reprobis scriptum est: «Non sic impii, non sic, sed tanquam pulvis, quem projicit ventus a facie nostra (Psal. I).» Non simus, fratres mei, non simus paleae, non simus zizania, quae ventilabrum ultimae discussionis excutiat, et mox ignis aeternae combustionis exurat. Pertimescamus semper illam evangelicae comminationis sententiam, qua dicitur: «Sinite, inquit, utraque usque ad messem, et in tempore messis dicite messoribus: Colligite primum zizania, et alligate fasciculos ad comburendum, triticum autem congregate in horreum meum (Matth. XIII).» Pensate diligenter verba Veritatis, pensate cum timore quod dicitur: alligate fasciculos ad comburendum; zizania quippe fasciculis alligantur, quia in illo perpetuae damnationis incendio homicidae cum homicidis, adulteri cum adulteris, perjuri cum perjuris, incestuosi cum incestuosis, non diverso poenalium tormentorum genere constringuntur. Illic eos infinitae poenae patens gehennae barathrum devorat, qui hic se arroganter in superbiae cornibus extollebant; illic eorum carnes atque medullas saginis irriguas crepitans flamma depascet, qui hic arsere deliciis, et aestuantis explevere illicebras voluptatis.

Attend, my most beloved brothers, consider, weigh that the whole universal Church diffused in all the world is one threshing floor so full of good and bad, just and perverse, as of weeds (*zizania*) and wheat, as of chaff and fruits. But until the cultivator of the earth begins to thresh, the threshing floor contains everything indifferently, both what is to be stored in barns, and what is to be handed over to the flames. But what in the threshing floor is liable to the flames, what is to be reserved for the barns, unless what John the Baptist clearly discerns in the Gospel when speaking of the Lord, he says: "Whose winnowing fan (*ventilabrum*) is in his hand, and he will purge his threshing floor, and he will gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire (Matt. 3)?" But whence do we discern whether we are chaff or wheat? From the gravity namely of morals or inconstancy, from weight or levity. For whoever is snatched away by the breeze of pleasures, whoever is impelled by the whirlwind of fury, whom now the spirit of pride vainly lifts up, now sorrow or an injury inflicted precipitates, he indeed is to be called chaff or a reed. Which namely John is denied to be, when it is said of him from the mouth of Truth: "What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken by the wind (Matt. 11)?" Which on the contrary is written concerning the reprobate: "Not so the impious, not so, but as the dust, which the wind casts away from our face (Psalm 1)." Let us not be, my brothers, let us not be chaff, let us not be weeds, which the winnowing fan of the final discussion may shake out, and soon the fire of eternal combustion may burn up. Let us always dread that sentence of the evangelical commination, by which it is said: "Suffer," he says, "both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest say to the reapers: Gather first the weeds, and bind bundles for burning, but the wheat gather into my barn (Matt. 13)." Weigh diligently the words of Truth, weigh with fear what is said: bind bundles for burning; the weeds namely are bound in bundles, because in that fire of perpetual damnation murderers with murderers, adulterers with adulterers, perjurers with perjurers, the incestuous with the incestuous, are constrained by no diverse kind of penal torments. There the open abyss of Gehenna of infinite punishment devours them, who here arrogantly extolled themselves in the horns of pride; there the crackling flame will feed on their flesh and marrows watered with fatness, who here burned with delights, and fulfilled the allurements of boiling pleasure.

Bene itaque dicuntur fasciculis alligari, quia nequaquam eos tunc separat diversitas ultionis, quod hic similitudo sociaverat pravitatis, et qui nunc eisdem criminibus sunt obnoxii, ejusdem supplicii postmodum tenentur animadversione constricti. De quibus omnibus alibi sub unius personae specie dicitur: «Ligatis manibus et pedibus, mittite illum in tenebras exteriores (Matth. XXII).» Illic membra ligantur ad poenam, quae hic soluta et libera ferebantur ad culpam. Vel tunc digne constringenda sunt in suppliciis, quae nunc male ligata sunt a pietatis operibus peragendis. Illic animae reproborum cum corporibus simul inexstinguibili cruciantur incendio, sicut hic in exsecutione pravi operis jungebantur. Unde et per Prophetam dicitur: «Descenderunt ad infernum cum armis suis (Ezech. XXXII).» Arma quippe peccantium membra sunt corporis, quibus reprobi homines diabolo militant, et ejus imperio, perverse vivendo, ministrant. Simul ergo cum animabus et corpora in aeterna morte damnantur, quae simul in pravi operis perpetratione vixerunt. De quibus Propheta dicit: «Ibi Assur, et sepulcra ejus (Ibid).» Quid enim per Assur, superbum videlicet regem, nisi diabolus intelligitur, qui juxta what scriptum est: «Ipse est rex super omnes filios superbiae?» (Job XLII.) Quid sepulcra, nisi mortuorum sunt habitacula? tunc autem diabolus in mortem corruit cum ab auctore vitae superbiendo recessit. Quisquis ergo nequitiae spiritum, qui vere mortuus est, in sui cordis hospitio per pravam voluntatem habitare permittit, procul dubio de semetipso sepulcrum facit. Et necesse est ut cum ipso simul illic tormentorum supplicia perferat, cui semetipsum hic habitaculum per nequitiam perversi operis exhibebat.

Quia ergo in area zizania simul continentur et triticum, videamus, fratres, si triticum sumus; videamus si ad horreum Dominicum reservamur. Sed quia dicit Apostolus: «Quae enim seminaverit homo, haec et metet (Gal. VI);» consideremus intente quid quotidie serimus, et sic jam conjicere possumus, quid postmodum necessario metere debeamus. Et ut exemplo facilius possit elucere quod dicimus, nunquid, fratres mei, qui hoc anno avenam sive lolium seminaverat, tritico se replere modo cellarium sperat? Nunquid cui sterilem placuit vitem serere, proventu leguminum ex ea poterit redundare? Et hae profecto quisquiliae, quas posuimus, victuales quodammodo species mentiuntur. Nam similitudinem quidem refectricum utcunque messium habent. Ita plane nonnulli sunt, qui religionis imaginem superficie tenus simulant, cum veram intus religionem habere vivendo contemnant. Ii nimirum in culmis et foliis frugum schema praetendunt, sed in ariditate medullae quisquilias contegunt.

Well therefore they are said to be bound in bundles, because diversity of vengeance by no means then separates them, whom similarity of wickedness had here associated, and those who are now liable to the same crimes, are afterwards held constrained by the animadversion of the same punishment. Concerning all of whom elsewhere it is said under the species of one person: "With hands and feet bound, cast him into exterior darkness (Matt. 22)." There the members are bound for punishment, which here were carried loose and free for fault. Or then they are worthily to be constrained in supplications, which now are evilly bound from performing the works of piety. There the souls of the reprobate are tortured together with their bodies in unquenchable fire, just as here they were joined in the execution of a wicked work. Whence also it is said through the Prophet: "They descended to hell with their arms (Ezek. 32)." The arms namely of those sinning are the members of the body, with which reprobate men militate for the devil, and minister to his command by living perversely. At the same time therefore with the souls also the bodies are damned in eternal death, which lived at the same time in the perpetration of a wicked work. Concerning which the Prophet says: "There is Assur, and its sepulchres (Ibid.)." For what is understood through Assur, namely the proud king, unless the devil, who according to what is written: "He is king over all the sons of pride (Job 41)?" What the sepulchres, unless they are the habitations of the dead? but then the devil fell into death when he departed from the author of life by being proud. Whoever therefore permits the spirit of wickedness, who is truly dead, to inhabit in the hospice of his heart through a perverse will, without doubt makes a sepulchre of himself. And it is necessary that he should at the same time endure there the supplications of torments with him, to whom he was here exhibiting himself as a habitation through the wickedness of a perverse work.

Since therefore in the threshing floor the weeds are contained together with the wheat, let us see, brothers, if we are wheat; let us see if we are reserved for the Lord's barn. But because the Apostle says: "For what things a man shall sow, these also he shall reap (Gal. 6);" let us intently consider what we sow daily, and thus we can already conjecture what we must afterwards necessarily reap. And that what we say may be able to shine forth more easily by an example, do you think, my brothers, that he who had this year sown oats or darnel (*lolium*), hopes to fill his storehouse now with wheat? Do you think he whom it pleased to sow a sterile vine, will be able to abound with a crop of legumes from it? And indeed these refuse things which we have placed, in a certain way lie about the species of food. For they have after a fashion the likeness of refreshing harvests. So plainly there are some, who simulate the image of religion on the surface, while they despise having true religion within by living. These namely in stalks and leaves pretend the schema of crops, but in the dryness of the marrow they cover refuse.

Necesse est itaque, fratres, vera virtutum nunc germina seminare, unde postmodum valeamus coelestium frugum gaudia aeterna colligere. Consideremus quod dicit Apostolus: «Qui parce seminat, parce et metet (II Cor. IX).» Parce nimirum seminat, qui pauca bona facit, qui abundare virtutibus parvipendit, qui in erogandae misericordiae et humanitatis studio proficere negligit, qui se in exhibendis fraternae charitatis officiis non extendit. Porro autem ille non parce sed ubertim seminat, qui ejusdem egregii praedicatoris sententiam servat: «Bonum, inquit, facientes non deficiamus: Tempore enim suo metemus non deficientes (Gal. VI).» Ille non parce seminat qui studet implere quod ipse alibi dicit: «Quaecunque facitis, fratres, sive in verbo, sive in facto, omnia in gloriam Domini facite (I Cor. X).» Plane qui vitam aeternam accipit, non parce, sed multum metit. Quid est ergo quod dicit, qui parce seminat, parce et metet; nisi tanquam manifeste denuntiet quia qui parce in bonis operibus contentus est seminare, vitae aeternae praemium nullatenus meretur accipere? Sicut itaque, fratres mei, quisquis secundum transitoriae hujus vitae ordinem apte vult vivere, non uno cujuslibet messis contentus est genere, sed diversarum genera frugum satagit abundare; ita profecto quicunque ad terram viventium, quicunque ad illud promptuarium coeleste festinat, necesse est ut per multos se bonorum operum labores exerceat, omniumque intra conscientiae suae cellarium virtutum germina congregare contendat.

Studete igitur, fratres, ut humilitatem veram, charitatem non fictam, patientiae longanimitatem, castitatem carnis et cordis, obedientiam veram, viscera pietatis, et sincerae misericordiae caeterarumque dona virtutum, in quantum vobis, Deo largiente, possibile est, habeatis, et sic quasi uberem ac multiplicem spiritualium segetum copiam in vestri pectoris promptuario recondatis.

Nec putetis quod virtus cuilibet ad perfectam salutem una sufficiat, si reliquas deesse contingat. Neque enim unaquaeque virtus est, si mixta aliis virtutibus non est. Pectus vestrum lorica semper patientiae muniat, et contra cuncta adversitatum jacula, contra tribulationum flagella, contra illatas injurias vos insuperabiles reddat. Sic enim triticum prius in area tunditur, calcatur, atteritur, ub abjectis paleis mundum cellario postea recondatur.

Sic profecto necesse est ut animae nostrae multa tunsionum ac verberum flagella sustineant, quatenus, depositis iniquitatum stipulis, purgatae ad horreum coeleste perveniant.

Hinc est enim quod B. Jacobus dicit: «Patientes estote usque ad adventum Domini. Ecce agricola exspectat pretiosum fructum terrae, patienter ferens, donec accipiat temporaneum et serotinum (Jac. V).»

In proventu denique rerum temporalium nolite sperare. Et ut cum Propheta loquar: «Divitiae si affluant, nolite cor apponere (Psal. LXI).»

It is necessary therefore, brothers, to sow now the true seeds of virtues, whence afterwards we may be able to gather the eternal joys of heavenly fruits. Let us consider what the Apostle says: "He who sows sparingly, shall also reap sparingly (2 Cor. 9)." He namely sows sparingly who does few good things, who thinks little of abounding in virtues, who neglects to profit in the study of bestowing mercy and humanity, who does not extend himself in exhibiting the offices of fraternal charity. Furthermore, however, he sows not sparingly but abundantly, who keeps the sentence of the same distinguished preacher: "Doing good," he says, "let us not fail: For in its time we shall reap, not failing (Gal. 6)." He sows not sparingly who strives to fulfill what he himself says elsewhere: "Whatever you do, brothers, whether in word or in deed, do all for the glory of the Lord (1 Cor. 10)." Plainly he who receives eternal life, reaps not sparingly, but much. What is it therefore that he says, he who sows sparingly, shall also reap sparingly; unless as if he manifestly denounces that he who is content to sow sparingly in good works, by no means deserves to receive the reward of eternal life? Just as therefore, my brothers, whoever wishes to live aptly according to the order of this transitory life, is not content with one kind of any harvest, but busies himself to abound in kinds of diverse fruits; so indeed whoever hastens to the land of the living, whoever to that heavenly storehouse, it is necessary that he exercise himself through many labors of good works, and strive to gather the seeds of all virtues within the storehouse of his conscience.

Strive therefore, brothers, that you may have true humility, charity not feigned, longanimity of patience, chastity of flesh and heart, true obedience, bowels of piety, and gifts of sincere mercy and of other virtues, in as much as it is possible for you, God granting it, and so that you may store away as it were a rich and manifold abundance of spiritual crops in the storehouse of your breast.

Nor think that one virtue is sufficient for anyone for perfect salvation, if it happens that the others are lacking. For neither is it each one a virtue, if it is not mixed with other virtues. Let the breastplate of patience always fortify your breast, and against all the darts of adversities, against the scourges of tribulations, against injuries inflicted, let it render you insuperable. For thus the wheat is first threshed in the threshing floor, trodden, worn down, so that with the chaff cast away, it may afterwards be stored away clean in the storehouse.

So indeed it is necessary that our souls sustain many scourges of beatings and lashes, so that, with the straws of iniquities laid aside, they may reach the heavenly barn purged.

For hence it is what Blessed James says: "Be patient until the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, patiently bearing, until he receives the early and the late (James 5)."

Finally, do not hope in the profit of temporal things. And that I may speak with the Prophet: "If riches abound, do not set your heart upon them (Psalm 61)."

In his ergo successibus ille vobis ad memoriam redeat qui dicebat: «Destruam horrea mea, et majora faciam, et illuc congregabo omnia quae nata sunt mihi et bona mea, et dicam animae meae: Anima habes multa bona reposita in annos plurimos, requiesce, comede, bibe, epulare (Luc. XII).» Cui protinus divina voce responsum est: «Stulte, hac nocte animam tuam repetent a te: Quae autem parasti cujus erunt?» (Ibid.)

O quanti hodie triturantes fructus agrorum in promptuariis colligunt, qui alterius anni segetes in hoc saeculo non videbunt! Quibus videlicet nunc mundus arridet, sed propinqua mors in insidiis latet. Qui profecto si tam vicinum suae vocationis agnoscerent terminum, alio transferrent a terrenis substantiis appetitum.

Igitur, fratres mei, quanto magis de vitae vestrae fine estis incerti, tanto formidolosius semper estote suspecti. Nolite apud vos rerum vestrarum decimas retinere, ne illic eas a vobis terribilis judex per ratiocinium exigat, ubi nemo poterit habere quod reddat. Pensate quid per Malachiam Dominus dicat. Nam cum de reversione Israel divina vox disputaret, praesto subjunxit: «Et dixistis: In quo configimus te? In decimis, et in primitiis: et in penuria vos maledicti estis, et vos me configitis, gens tota, inferre omnem decimam in horreum, ut sit cibus in domo mea (Malach. III).» Dicit Apostolus: «Reddite omnibus debita.» Et paulo post: «Nemini, inquit, quidquam debeatis, nisi ut invicem diligatis (Rom. XIII).» Si ergo prohibemur humana debita retinere, perpendite quam periculosum sit quae Dei sunt Deo non reddere (Luc. XX). Exhibite Sacerdotibus reverentiam, eorumque mandatis humiliter obedite. «Obedite, ait Apostolus, praepositis vestris, et subjacete eis; ipsi enim pervigilant quasi rationem pro animabus vestris reddituri, ut cum gaudio hoc faciant, et non gementes; hoc enim non expedit vobis (Hebr. XIII).» Si enim Redemptor noster propter Chananaeae meritum, a filia ejus daemonium expulit (Matth. XV), si propter offerentium fidem paralytico lectum gestare praecepit (Marc. II), si centurionis precibus puerum, qui male torquebatur, incolumem reddidit (Matth. VIII); quam necessario nos sacerdotum orationibus indigemus, qui nos Deo diversis vitiorum languoribus aegrotantes offerunt, et quotidianis precibus apud divinam clementiam pro nobis indesinenter insistunt? Quorum procul dubio meritis sublevamur, etiamsi adhuc ex nostrae negligentiae languore deprimimur.

In these successes, therefore, let him return to your memory who was saying: "I will destroy my barns, and make greater ones, and there I will gather all things that are born to me and my goods, and I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast many goods laid up for very many years, rest, eat, drink, feast (Luke 12)." To whom immediately it was answered by the divine voice: "Thou fool, this night they shall require thy soul from thee: but the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? (Ibid.)"

Oh, how many today threshing the fruits of the fields gather in storehouses, who will not see the crops of another year in this world! To whom namely the world now smiles, but nearby death lies in wait in ambushes. Who indeed, if they recognized so near a limit of their calling, would transfer their appetite elsewhere from earthly substances.

Therefore, my brothers, as much more as you are uncertain about the end of your life, so much more fearfully be always on your guard. Do not retain among you the tithes of your things, lest there the terrible judge should require them from you by an accounting, where no one will be able to have what he may return. Weigh what the Lord says through Malachi. For when the divine voice was disputing about the return of Israel, it immediately added: "And you said: In what do we pierce Thee? In tithes, and in firstfruits: and in penury you are cursed, and you pierce me, the whole nation, to bring in every tithe into the barn, that there may be food in my house (Malachi 3)." The Apostle says: "Render to all their dues." And a little after: "Owe no man anything," he says, "but to love one another (Rom. 13)." If therefore we are prohibited from retaining human debts, consider how dangerous it is not to render to God what are God's (Luke 20). Exhibit reverence to the Priests, and humbly obey their commands. "Obey," says the Apostle, "your superiors, and be subject to them; for they watch as if to render an account for your souls, that they may do this with joy, and not groaning; for this is not expedient for you (Hebr. 13)." For if our Redeemer, on account of the merit of the Canaanite woman, expelled the demon from her daughter (Matt. 15), if on account of the faith of those offering he commanded the paralytic to carry his bed (Mark 2), if by the prayers of the centurion he returned the boy, who was badly tortured, unharmed (Matt. 8); how necessarily do we need the prayers of the priests, who offer us to God sick with various languors of vices, and incessantly insist with daily prayers before the divine clemency for us? By whose merits without doubt we are lifted up, even if we are still depressed from the languor of our negligence.

Interea plane et illud ad mentem redit quod huic beato martyri Stephano, cui praesens sermo famulatus est, contigit. Nam, sicut in authentica passionis ejus narratur historia, mox ut baptizavit Nemesium, qui eum pro caecitate filiae suae rogaverat, eadem Lucilla, licet nedum fuisset lavacro sacri fontis abluta, lumen recepit. Cumque, ait, levaretur Nemesius de aqua, coepit clamare filia ejus dicens: Ecce video hominem qui tetigit oculos meos, et lumen splendidum circa eum, atque mox subditur: Tunc baptizavit filiam ejus. O laudanda virtus divina! o praedicanda redemptionis nostrae clementia! Alius baptizatur ad lumen, et alteri lumen redditur. Pater recepit cordis, et filia protinus aperuit oculos frontis. Ambo tamen ad unam et veram perveniunt lucem, dum omnem pristini erroris respuunt caecitatem. Sic nimirum B. Stephanus, qui, juxta Veritatis vocem, lux mundi hujus erat (Joan. I), lumen cordibus infundebat, et animarum sacrificium divinis obtutibus offerebat. Hoc sacrificium, fratres mei, cum B. Stephano et nos pro modulo nostro semper Deo studeamus offerre, ut non solum de nostra salute solliciti, sed ad lucrandas etiam proximorum nostrorum animas simus solerter intenti; quatenus dum charitatis hostia in ara nostri pectoris adoletur, ab illo sacrificium nostrum mereatur in odorem suavitatis accipi, qui in ara crucis pro salute nostra dignatus est immolari, Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Meanwhile plainly also that returns to the mind which happened to this blessed martyr Stephen, whom the present sermon has served. For, as it is narrated in the authentic history of his passion, as soon as he baptized Nemesius, who had asked him on account of the blindness of his daughter, the same Lucilla, although she had not yet been washed by the bath of the sacred font, received light. And when, he says, Nemesius was raised from the water, his daughter began to cry out saying: Behold I see a man who touched my eyes, and a splendid light around him, and immediately it is added: Then he baptized her daughter. O laudable divine virtue! O to be preached clemency of our redemption! One is baptized for light, and to the other light is restored. The father received that of the heart, and the daughter immediately opened the eyes of the face. Both however reach to the one and true light, while they reject all blindness of their former error. So namely Blessed Stephen, who, according to the voice of Truth, was the light of this world (John 1), was infusing light into hearts, and was offering the sacrifice of souls to the divine gazes. This sacrifice, my brothers, with Blessed Stephen let us also always strive to offer to God according to our small measure, so that we may be solicitous not only about our own salvation, but also intently alert to gain the souls of our neighbors; so that while the host of charity is burned on the altar of our breast, our sacrifice may deserve to be received in an odor of sweetness by Him, who on the altar of the cross deigned to be immolated for our salvation, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ages of ages. Amen.